THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY

Rev. E. HASTINGS, M.A.

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EDITED BY

REV. EDWARD HASTINGS, M.A.

JOINT EDITOR OF 'THE EXPOSITORY TIMES'

FOUNDED BY

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

EDITOR OF
'THE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE'
'THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS'
AND OTHER WORKS

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THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS
THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

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The aim of THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE is to preserve all that is worth preserving of the modern interpretation of the Bible. It is the thought rather than the expression that is retained, though the expression has not been rejected when it seemed worthy. So much, however, has been done in the way of condensing, re-arranging, re-writing, adding to, and illustrating, that the sources have not as a rule been given. But so far as these are published sermons, they will be found in the Index to Modern Sermons which accompanies each volume. THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE contains also much that is new, written by the Editor and others.

Printed in Great Britain
by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh

THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Introduction is to discuss certain questions which need to be considered if the Epistle is to be read with intelligence and with full spiritual profit. These questions concern the contents of the Epistle, its author, unity, place of composition, date, the community to which it was addressed and Paul's relations therewith, the circumstances implied in the letter and Paul's purpose in writing it, its leading ideas and permanent value. These subjects are not only interesting in themselves, but form a necessary study if we are to put the Epistle in its right historical perspective, and so make it possible for us to receive its message.

An Outline of the Contents of the Epistle

i. 1-2. Opening salutation.

i. 3-11. Paul's thanksgivings and prayers for the spiritual progress and enrichment of the Philippians.

i. 12-26. His present experience as a prisoner. The effects produced: on outsiders (the 'prætorian guard' and 'all the rest,' 13); on the local brethren, 14-18; and on himself, 19-24.

i. 27-ii. 4. Exhortations to stand fast, to show a united front, 27, and to cultivate lowliness of mind, ii. 3-4.

ii. 5-11. The mind that was in Christ Jesus. His Humiliation, 5-8, and Exaltation, 9-11.

ii. 12-18. Warnings against 'murmurings and disputings,' 14, and an exhortation to the Philippians to joy and rejoice with Paul, 18.

ii. 19-24. Paul's intention to send Timothy as soon as the issue of his impending trial is clear, 23. His own hope of release and of paying a visit to Philippi, 24.

ii. 25-30. An explanation of the reason why Paul has sent back Epaphroditus whose devotion and courage he praises highly. 'Value men like that, for he nearly died in the service of Christ by risking his life to make up for the services you were not here to render me,' 30 (J. Moffatt).

iii. 1b-iv. 3. A section, possibly from another of Paul's letters, warning his readers against Judaizing teachers who insist on the necessity of circumcision and pride themselves on their national privileges. How Paul might glory if he cared to do so, 4-6. His new world of values, 7-8; his spiritual aspirations, 9-11; and his strivings after God's high calling in Christ Jesus, 12-14. An appeal to the readers to be imitators of him and to mark the character of those who so walk, 17. A warning against antinomian Christians, apparently within the Church, who turn Christian liberty into licence, 18-19. The contrast of true Christian citizenship, the expectation of Christ's Parousia, and the transformation of the body, 20-21. An exhortation to stedfastness, iv. 1. An appeal to Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind, iv. 2, and to Synzygos that he will help them in this, iv. 3.

iv. 4-7. Exhortations to rejoicing, 4, forbearance, 5, superiority to anxiety, and prayer, 6. The promise of God's peace guarding the heart and the thoughts, 7.

iv. 8-9. Paul's appeal to the Philippians to reflect upon great positive virtues, and to practise what he has taught them and has exemplified in his own life among them.

iv. 10-20. Paul's grateful acknowledgment of the gift brought from Philippi by the hand of Epaphroditus, 10, 14-16, 18. His self-sufficiency, ability to adapt himself to varying circumstances, and power to do all things in 'him that strengtheneth' him, 11-13, 17.

iv. 21-22. Final greetings and Benediction.

The Author

To-day the Pauline authorship of the Epistle is accepted without question by almost all New Testament scholars. The style is distinctively that of Paul, and no good reason can be given

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why anyone should have written the letter in his name. At the beginning of the second century it was known to Ignatius and Polycarp, and was included in the Canon of Marcion (about A.D. 140), while towards the end of that century it was mentioned in the Muratorian Canon. 'Few things in modern criticism are better assured than the authenticity of this Epistle, and it may be accepted without any misgiving' (A. S. Peake).

The Unity of the Epistle

In view of the doctrinal contents of ii. 5-11 (the Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ), this passage has been claimed as a later and non-Pauline insertion. This contention is without justification. The style is that of Paul, and the association of great doctrinal statements with immediate and practical interests is entirely in his manner (*cf.* Rom. xv. 3 and 2 Cor. viii. 9). It may be that the Apostle is making use of an early Christian hymn; the balance and rhythmical structure of the section favour this view; but in any case the passage is from Paul's hand and forms an integral part of the Epistle.

A somewhat different view should probably be taken of the third chapter. This section was undoubtedly written by Paul, but originally it may well have formed part of a separate letter. It is strange that practically in the middle of the Epistle Paul should begin a section by the word translated 'finally' (literally, 'as for what remains'), and still more strange that he should make so sharp and abrupt a transition to the subjects of Judaizing teachers, circumcision, confidence in the flesh, perfection, and antinomianism. 'His pen,' says Dr A. H. M'Neile, 'suddenly becomes the rapier of the combatant, with which he attacks a two-fold enemy.' Bishop Lightfoot suggested that at this point Paul was interrupted in the writing of the letter by news from Philippi of the activity there of his Judaizing opponents, but this explanation seems artificial and is quite unsupported. It is much better to suppose that, as in other cases (2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1, 2 Cor. x.-xiii., and Rom. xvi. 1-23), a fragment of Pauline correspondence has been fused with the letter to the Philippians. The fragment probably begins with the second part of iii. 1 ('To write the same things to you . . .'). Where it ends is a more difficult question. Dr J. Hugh Michael suggests that it ends with iii. 19, and that originally verse 20 immediately followed the first part of iii. 1: 'My brothers, rejoice in the Lord; for we are a colony of heaven.' The objection to this view is that the reference to citizenship in heaven and to the transformation of the body is a conscious contrast to the description of the antinomian teachers 'whose god is their belly' and 'who mind earthly things' (iii. 18-19). It is better to find the end of the fragment either in iv. 1, or—with Dr Kirsopp Lake—in iv. 3. The repetition of 'Rejoice in the Lord alway' in iv. 4 may indicate the break of the original connection with 'Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord' in iii. 1.

The Place of Composition

The Epistle to the *Philippians* was written while Paul was a prisoner (see i. 13 and iv. 22), and the traditional view is that, along with the Epistles to the *Ephesians*, to the *Colossians*, and to *Philemon*, it was written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome (A.D. 62-64). Some scholars have contended for Cæsarea as the place of composition, but the case is not a strong one. Very much more can be said for the attempts which have recently been made to show that the letter was written from Ephesus during his long stay in that city in the course of his third missionary journey (see Acts xix). The advantage of this view is that it throws a welcome flood of light upon a very important period of Paul's activity; it permits us to date the Epistle about the year A.D. 54, and accounts for the closer affinity which exists between it and the earlier letters of Paul.

The arguments which favour Rome are as follows:—(1) Paul is said to have been a prisoner in Rome in Acts xxviii. 16, 30, 31; (2) the headquarters of the 'prætorian guard' (i. 13) were at Rome; (3) the reference to the saints 'of Cæsar's household' (iv. 22) suits Rome; (4) Timothy is associated with Paul in i. 1, as also in *Colossians* and *Philemon*, which presumably were written from Rome; (5) some early tradition favours Rome, *e.g.* the Monarchian Prologue to the Epistle.[1] This

[1] But the Monarchian Prologue to *Colossians* says that that Epistle was written when Paul was a prisoner in Ephesus (*apostolus iam ligatus scribit eis ab Epheso*).

is a strong case, but the remarkable thing about these arguments is that not one of them excludes the possibility that the Epistle may have been written from Ephesus. An inscription proves that soldiers of the Prætorian Guard [1] were stationed at Ephesus, and a second inscription shows that 'the slaves of our Lord Augustus' formed burial clubs there. We know also from Acts xix. 22 that Timothy was associated with Paul in Ephesus, whereas apart from the Epistles in question we cannot prove his presence in Rome. As for early tradition, this may itself be based merely on inferences derived from the Imprisonment Epistles. The strongest objection to the Ephesian origin of the letter is that in the Acts Luke makes no mention of any imprisonment in Ephesus. This argument, however, is by no means decisive. There are many obvious gaps in Luke's record, as Paul's correspondence with Corinth reveals all too plainly. The Corinthian letters, moreover, tell of sufferings endured by the Apostle in Ephesus and Asia greater than anything which the Acts alone would permit us to suspect. In 1 Cor. xv. 32 Paul speaks of fighting 'with beasts at Ephesus.' The words may be intended to be taken literally, in which case an imprisonment in Ephesus is certain; but even if they are figurative, the same inference may be justified. In 2 Cor. xi. 23 Paul speaks of being 'in prisons more abundantly,' and this refers to a period preceding his imprisonment at Cæsarea and at Rome, while 1 Cor. iv. 9-13 and 2 Cor. i. 8-10 show clearly how greatly Paul had suffered in Ephesus and Asia. 'We despaired,' he writes, 'even of life: yea, we ourselves had the sentence of death within ourselves.' Among the arguments which favour Ephesus as the place of composition may be mentioned the fact that, on this theory, it is easier to account for Paul's intention to visit Philippi in the event of his release (i. 25, ii. 24), at a time when his gaze was definitely turned towards Rome and the West (Acts xix. 21, xx. 25, Rom. xv. 28). It is also easier to find room for the various journeys alluded to in *Philippians* (ii. 19, 26, 28, 30), and for the correspondence which apparently had passed between Paul and Philippi. On the whole, the case for Ephesus is much stronger than that for Rome, even if, in view of the evidence at our disposal, a confident decision is not possible. At the present time the question is the subject of keen debate among New Testament scholars. The most valuable recent discussions are those of Dr J. Hugh Michael in the *Moffatt New Testament Commentary on Philippians* (1927) and of Dr G. S. Duncan in *St Paul's Ephesian Ministry* (1929). Dr Duncan thinks that all the Imprisonment Epistles (*Philippians*, *Ephesians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*) were written from Ephesus, and claims that in the case of Philippians the argument is so strong 'that the Ephesian origin of that letter ought to remain no longer a matter of dispute' (*op cit.*, p. 6).

[1] It is probable that *prætorium* in i. 13 means, not the 'prætorian guard,' but the governor's palace, as it does in Mark xv. 16, Matt. xxvii. 27, John xviii. 28, 33, xix. 9, and Acts xxiii. 35.

The Date of the Epistle

The date of the Epistle depends on the place of the Apostle's imprisonment. If Paul wrote from Rome, the date is to be found within the period A.D. 60-64; and among those who take this view it is usual to regard *Philippians* as the last of the Four Captivity Epistles, the remaining three being *Ephesians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*. If Ephesus was the place of writing, the Epistle must have been written about eight years earlier, during the period A.D. 53-55. In the latter case, the Epistle is earlier than *2 Corinthians*, and possibly earlier than *1 Corinthians*. The contents of the letter offer no objections to this earlier date; on the contrary, apart from the reference to 'bishops and deacons' in i. 1, they suit this period better than the later date. Dr Duncan assigns *Philippians* to the summer of A.D. 54, and places it before *1 Corinthians*, *Ephesians*, *Colossians*, *Philemon*, and *2 Corinthians*.

Philippi

Important for its strategic position and for the presence of gold mines in its vicinity, Philippi was refounded and named by Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. It was near Philippi that Octavian and Antony defeated the forces of Brutus and Cassius in the year 42 B.C. Subsequently Octavian made the city a military colony, and conferred the privileges of the *Ius Italicum* on its citizens. In the narrative of Acts xvi. 19-40, Luke reflects the local pride of the *duumviri* or magistrates,

who delighted to call themselves *prætores* and their officers *lictores*. The population was predominantly Gentile.

Paul's Relations with Philippi

Accompanied by Silas, Timothy, and Luke, Paul first visited Philippi during his second missionary journey. Luke's vivid narrative in Acts xvi. 11-40 describes the stories of Lydia, the 'seller of purple,' the maid with a 'spirit of divination,' the imprisonment and earthquake, the jailor, and the release of Paul and Silas. A second visit is probably implied in Acts xx. 1, and in Acts xx. 6 Philippi is mentioned as the point of departure for Paul's last voyage to Palestine. From the Epistle itself (iv. 15, 16) we learn that on more than one occasion the Philippian Christians had sent gifts to relieve Paul's needs.

The Circumstances Implied by the Letter

The circumstances which called forth the Epistle can be inferred from the letter itself, but they are perhaps more complicated than appears on the surface. It is clear that the Philippians had sent a gift to Paul during his imprisonment by the hand of Epaphroditus, and from iv. 10-20 it is evident that one of Paul's main reasons for writing was to express his gratitude for the gift. But the peculiarities of the passage just mentioned, and other features in the Epistle, have led several scholars to infer that other letters had been exchanged between Paul and Philippi before the present letter was written. From ii. 26 ('because ye had heard that he was sick') it appears that news had already passed from the place of Paul's imprisonment to Philippi and back again. But the most significant passage is iv. 10-20. Here there is no want of gratitude in Paul's words (see verses 10, 14-16, 18-20), but the position of this section at the *end* of the letter, and Paul's strong assertions of independence (see verses 11-13, 17) are very remarkable. 'The method he adopts is intelligible only on the supposition that he is expanding in self-defence some previous statement which his readers had misconstrued' (Dr J. Hugh Michael, *op. cit.*, p. 210 f.). Dr Michael's interesting suggestion, resting in part on the work of Th. Zahn, is that in an earlier letter Paul had said that he was thankful for the gift but in no need of it. Wrongly supposing that this reply pointed to a want of appreciation, the Philippians had replied reminding Paul that on other occasions he had been glad enough to receive their help. 'Paul, however, does not recant; on the contrary, he repeats his earlier declarations, though not in the brief form in which they were originally made. He expands, enlarges, and explains.' The alternating expressions of gratitude and independence in iv. 10-20 mark Paul's handling of a delicate situation.

Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle

Besides Paul's desire to thank the Philippian Christians for their gift, and to explain his attitude thereto, it is evident that he had other purposes in view as well. (1) He desired to express his love for the Philippians and to assure them of his constant prayers on their behalf (i. 3-11). (2) He was also anxious to reassure them concerning his present lot as a prisoner and to show the effects produced by it upon outsiders and upon the members of the Church in his vicinity (i. 12-26). Sometimes he speaks in anticipation of his release (i. 25), and even of his coming to Philippi (ii. 24), but elsewhere he appears uncertain about his fate and even to anticipate the worst (i. 20). (3) Several indications in the letter show that Paul was concerned about the need for unity and stedfastness among the Philippians (i. 27, ii. 12-18), especially in view of the persecutions to which they were exposed (i. 28-30). (4) While the tone of the Epistle is one of commendation, it is clear that Paul realized the need of a greater humility and lowliness of mind on the part of his readers (ii. 1-4). 'Doing nothing,' he writes, 'through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself' (ii. 3). It is in this connection that he pens his sublime doctrinal passage on the Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ (ii. 5-11). (5) Along with these warnings and exhortations, Paul is anxious that the Philippians should set their minds on great positive virtues (iv. 8-9). (6) A further purpose is visible in the passage which speaks of Timothy's forthcoming visit to Philippi. Paul wishes to commend Timothy to them. 'I have no man like-minded.'

'Ye know the proof of him.' (7) Finally, the Apostle wishes to explain the reason for the return of Epaphroditus. The Philippians had sent Epaphroditus along with their gift in order that he might be of personal service to Paul during his imprisonment. In the carrying out of his duties Epaphroditus had fallen 'sick nigh unto death' and was greatly troubled because the Philippians had heard of this. His recovery had brought the greatest relief to Paul's anxiety: 'God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow' (ii. 27). The Apostle, however, had seen his secret longing for home and friends, and with characteristic generosity had taken it upon himself to send him back to Philippi: 'I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need' (ii. 25).

If iii. 1*b*-iv. 3 is really part of the Epistle, or if originally it formed part of another letter to Philippi, Paul's purpose in this section is to warn the Philippians against Judaizers and against men with antinomian tendencies.

Leading Religious Ideas of the Epistle

(1) The most notable feature of the letter is the abundance and variety of its references to Christ. The references to the Spirit are comparatively few (i. 19, ii. 1, iii. 3), but in the space of four brief chapters Christ is mentioned at least fifty times. He is frequently described as 'Lord,' and in iii. 20 is referred to as 'Saviour,' while reference is made to His 'tender mercies' (i. 8), His 'comfort' (ii. 1), and His 'grace' (iv. 23), to His Cross (iii. 18), and to 'the excellency of the knowledge' of Him (iii. 8). Paul speaks of gaining Christ (iii. 8), of being apprehended by Him (iii. 12), and of being found in Him (iii. 9), and further describes Him as the sphere of hope (ii. 19), stedfastness (iv. 1), unity (iv. 2), and joy (iv. 4, 10), as the beginner of a good work among the Philippians (i. 6), and as the object of glorying (iii. 3).

(2) The most important Christological passage is ii. 5-11. Much discussion has turned on the question whether this section speaks of the Pre-existent Life of Christ as well as His Life on earth, or solely of the latter. The former view is almost certainly correct. The mind of Christ, who counted it not 'booty to be snatched to be on an equality with God' (ii. 6), is a far more impressive ground for the exhortation, 'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (ii. 5), if His renunciation includes the sacrifice of the conditions of a pre-incarnate state. Other passages in his writings (Gal. iv. 4, Rom. viii. 3, 2 Cor. viii. 9) show that Paul believed in the Pre-existence of Christ, an idea for which he was doubtless indebted to the influence of Alexandrian thought. The idea is tentatively presented and it is not necessary to think that it was any more sharply defined in Paul's mind. Modern speculations which have built elaborate theories on the word 'emptied' in ii. 6 would have been foreign to Paul's mind. He is not thinking of the renunciation of the attributes of deity but of the sacrifice of its conditions and glories. If his words suggest more to us than this, we must remember that we are describing our own thoughts, not Paul's. Still warm with the glow of genuine religion, the section marks the beginning of Christian attempts to express the meaning of the Incarnation, and it is noteworthy that the climax of the hymn is the primitive Christian confession of Jesus Christ as Lord (ii. 11).

(3) Paul's idea of the Christian life as one of constant progress finds classical expression in iii. 11-16. Paul does not consider himself to have 'apprehended,' but like the runner in the foot race, he stretches forward towards the object he is eager to reach. 'Let us therefore,' he says, with almost certainly a reference to those who fancied that *they* had already attained, 'as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you' (iii. 15).

(4) The practical absence of ecclesiastical passages in the Epistle makes all the more remarkable the reference to 'the bishops and deacons' in i. 1. On this account some scholars explain the phrase as a later insertion, while others treat it as descriptive of those who exercised functions of oversight and service in the Philippian Church. It is, however, by no means improbable that Philippi, a Gentile Church, already had officers who bore these names in connection with matters of financial administration, but in any case the stage of ecclesiastical development is still far removed from that represented in the Ignatian Epistles, where the Bishop is already viewed as the Vicar of Christ.

(5) Paul's ideas concerning the Parousia, or Coming of Christ, still retain a primitive cast. It is commonly supposed that *Philippians* marks a wide departure from an earlier stage in Paul's thinking as represented, for example, in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18. This view is only partially correct. It is true that in *Philippians* the idea that Paul will himself be alive at the Parousia is absent, and that he speaks of departing and being with Christ (i. 23); but no less than three times does he speak of the Day of Christ (i. 6, 10, ii, 16; *cf.* iv. 5) as the goal of hope and endeavour, and of waiting for 'a Saviour' from heaven, 'the Lord Jesus Christ' (iii. 20). If Paul looks forward to the Day of Christ, he none the less holds that already the believer has his 'citizenship in heaven' (iii. 20; cf. Luke x. 20). He awaits a resurrection which is not merely the resuscitation of the present human body, 'the body of our humiliation,' but its transformation until it resembles the body of Christ's glory (iii. 21). A similar idea appears in 2 Cor. v. 1-4, which, if the Ephesian origin of *Philippians* is accepted, was written during the same period. It is evident that, while receptive to contemporary ideas, Paul's thinking remains fundamentally Jewish. He has no use for the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul apart from the body, but looks for a new organism which in some undefined sense is continuous with the present human body. In 1 Cor. xv. 44 he describes it as 'a spiritual body.'

The Permanent Value of the Epistle

The permanent value of the Epistle is evident from the summary of its leading ideas. The Epistle will always stand out as a classical record of what Christ meant to Paul and to the primitive Church at Philippi, and, in consequence, of what He may be to us still. Just because it is expressed in the language of religious devotion the great hymn to the Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ will continue to serve the needs of present-day religion far better than more speculative attempts to explain the mysteries of the Incarnation, although it raises, and will continue to raise, questions we cannot answer concerning the pre-incarnate conditions of Christ's life. The description of Christian striving in chapter iii. will not be superseded, and is invaluable alike as a warning against the fancies of those who think they have already attained, and as an inspiration to all to press on towards the mark of God's high calling which comes to men in Christ Jesus. If the expectation of the Parousia has to-day lost still more of its peculiar Jewish dress, the hope of a final consummation when Christ shall be all in all, is a permanent Christian possession. The hope, too, of a transformed spiritual body, the organ of a richer life, is thoroughly in line with many tendencies of current thought and hope. On the purely historical side *Philippians* continues to be a document of the highest importance, and this value will be enhanced rather than diminished if the Ephesian origin of the Epistle gains increasing support from scholars. What a picture we obtain from it of the intimate relations which existed between Paul and his converts, of his own hopes and fears in prison, of his tenderness, his passion, his courtesy, his unfailing confidence in Christ! The other personalities mentioned in the Epistle are also living beings. Timothy, Epaphroditus, Euodia, Syntyche are people of flesh and blood, and even the Philippians themselves are men and women whose thoughts, disputes, struggles, failings, and virtues we can plainly see. Not the least part of the value of the Epistle lies in the great utterances of the Apostle which in unforgettable words express great Christian principles and beliefs for all time. Some of these have already been mentioned, but besides these stand out the great words about the Peace of God which guards the heart and the thoughts in Christ Jesus (iv. 7). Equally precious are the noble words which still invite us to reflect on great virtues and their visible expression wherever it is found: 'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things' (iv. 8). The closing words of the Epistle, and especially the reference to the Imperial slaves, remind us of the triumphs which from the beginning Christianity was destined to win, while the last words of all breathe a benediction which reaches us still: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.'

Vincent Taylor

Saints

Phil. i. 1.—'Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.'

For quite a thousand years the Churches of the West have commemorated All Saints' Day, illuminating the declining and darkening year with the spiritual splendour of the thought of those exalted multitudes who have outsoared our shadows into the light of God. For it is with the holy ones departed that the festival, beyond a doubt, was primarily from the first concerned.

But the word 'saint,' when we follow it through the New Testament, by no means most frequently connects itself with the holy dead. Rather the word gravitates by Scriptural usage towards the seen and the temporal for its setting. By a saint the Apostle commonly means a being altogether, as to conditions and surroundings, like ourselves. We read of 'poor saints' who need pecuniary relief by Church collections: 'saints' resident and busy in town and city life, saints of Rome, of Colossæ, of Thessalonica, and saints of Philippi. Not the Garden of God was the place of life for the saints of Philippi, but the Roman military town, with its vices and superstitions, and its angry rabble, its shops and market, its court-house and its inner prison. One of those Philippian saints was a merchant-woman, another was governor of the gaol, another a recent victim of demoniacal possession, still, very likely, the chattel of the slave-owner. Yet there and then, out in the open, in the thick of their Philippian life, they were all the saints of God.

¶ I cannot praise, says Milton, a fugitive and cloister'd virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.

Not cloistered saints, that bid the world
  Remember they forget—its lure defy,
Whose abnegating robes accost the glance
  Of lost humanity;
Not they whose moving lips attest
  Repeated prayer, to shame the throng or
    mart,
Whose fingers outward clasp a crucifix;
  Not they who stand apart—
Are Thy swift followers alone,
  Sweet Christ! Unveiled, untonsured, they
    there be
Who hold their mired brothers to their heart,
  Even for love of Thee,
Who didst remember to the end
  Thy world, though they had Thee forgot
    and fled—
A hillside Calvary Thy holy lot,
  Mountain and sea Thy bed.[1]

1. 'The saints who are at Philippi,' the *hagioi* there. What does the word *hagioi* mean? The idea underlying the word is that of separateness, of devotedness to some holy purpose. The word would be used with exactness concerning, for example, a gift which had been set apart as a sacrifice. It signifies, that is to say, not something which is already holy or which is holy in itself, but rather something which has now been set aside, consecrated to some holy use. There is another word which might be used to describe a good man—*hieros*. The New Testament would call a thing *hieros* which was in itself spotlessly clean—white linen, for instance. But the New Testament would hesitate to call any man *hieros*. It is doubtful, indeed, if you would get any man since Christ came into the world to make that awful claim.

A man is *hagios*, or saintly, not because his heart is white, not because his hands have always been clean, not because he can call God to witness that he has always been what he should have been. Not that at all. A man is called *hagios*, or saint, who can humbly claim and protest in the very hearing of God that he means to be a good man. And if in later days he should fail in some matter, and the world should get to know of his failure, even that need not blot out his name from the roll of saints, if he can plead—and, of course, only God knows whether he is absolutely sincere—that even in the hour of his failure he protested. One might indeed be perfectly frank and say that the New Testament demands nothing of its saints but their absolute sincerity and humility. It asks nothing of us but that our intention shall be pure.

If by 'saints' St Paul had meant those who were perfect, or those who were now beyond the reach of temptation, then the word would sadden us, because it would exclude us. But

[1] Martha Gilbert Dickinson.

that is not the meaning. The 'saints' are those who now are at least sincere. They are those who, in spite of all earlier failures and unworthiness, have now given themselves to God. The thing that makes one a saint according to the New Testament is, not that one has been anything, but only this—that one has now come effectually and consciously under the eye of Christ. When Peter, to our Lord's thrice-repeated question, at length answered, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' he was making the only application that can be made for the rank of saintliness. In the New Testament word there is none of the complacency and self-righteousness which have grown like moss about it. This word, like Christ Himself, gives us a name higher than we deserve, and takes the will for the deed. It is what we would be, not what we are, that pleases or displeases God. It is what we would be that one day we shall be. And what is all this except to say that, in the view of God, the intention is everything?

¶ During those gloomy October days of 1915, Nurse Edith Cavell, whose statue, near Trafalgar Square, is one of London's most honoured adornments, sat in her lonely prison at Brussels awaiting execution. She had one companion—her precious little copy of *The Imitation of Christ*. In her last moments she asked that it should be sent, after the execution, to her cousin, Mr E. D. Cavell. That gentleman received it three years later. And, opening it, his eye was arrested by one sentence which was marked and underlined. It had comforted the lonely prisoner as, with unwavering courage, she had faced her dreadful death. It was this: *Man considereth the deeds, but God weigheth the intentions.*[1]

2. The word 'saint' is a great word and an uplifting. It carries in it the grandeur of the fact that the redeemed man's life is lived within the possessing hands of God. Yet we see it is no remote and intangible term of an imaginative devotion. The Apostle means by it manifestly something which can live, and labour, and suffer in the common walk of life. He applies it without an effort to then modern mortal lives. For we can never remember too well, what the imagination is apt to forget, that the passing hour in all ages is always modern, and presents always its experiences to those who have to meet it without the slightest relief of atmosphere and distance. There never was a day that was old at the time; certainly there was not at Philippi. The pagan military colony of the Balkans in the year, say, 54, was as little friendly to a spiritual ideal as any Monastir or Salonica could seem to be to-day. Yet in that moral air, at once harsh and pestilential, the saints did live and move, true factors in the scene. Neighbours among neighbours, they were linked by every bond of life to their surroundings; none the less, indeed the more, Philippians for being saints. Therefore, in a way absolutely new and wonderful, they found Him around them in the world, and they served the world for Him, in a life perfectly practical in its activities while perfectly Divine in its inner law.

¶ Some seventy years later than the date of our text, it was the strange sunlight of a celestial life shed upon the common path that moved the soul of Aristides and prompted his appeal to Antoninus. In his wonderful sketch of the Christians of the second century there is no allusion whatever to ascetic rigours and seclusions, nor again to supernatural displays, to unknown tongues and sudden healing miracles. But the observer stood awed and magnetically attracted before the people who, without pretension, without self-consciousness, but with the large facility of a new nature, were true, and pure, and kind in ordinary intercourse, joyful and thankful before their God.

¶ There is nothing outwardly to distinguish a 'saint' from common persons . . . the saint has no 'fads,' and you may live in the same house with him and never find out that he is not a sinner like yourself unless you rely on negative proofs, or obtrude lax ideas upon him, and so provoke him to silence. He may impress you, indeed, by his harmlessness and imperturbable good temper, and probably by some lack of appreciation of modern humour and ignorance of some things which men are expected to know, and by never seeming to have much use for his time when it can be of any service to you; but on the whole he will give you an agreeable impression of general inferiority to yourself. . . . I have known two or three such persons, and I declare that, but for the peculiar line of psychological research to which I am addicted, and hints from others, I should never have guessed

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Nest of Spears*, 184.

that they were any wiser or better than myself or any other ordinary man of the world with a prudent regard for the common proprieties.

I once asked a person more learned than I am in such matters to tell me what was the real difference. The reply was that the saint does everything that any other decent person does, only somewhat better, and with a totally different motive.[1]

3. The apostolic succession of the saints is the same still in its idea, and it can be the same still in its realization. Now also it is modern times, and a thousand conditions adverse to the great ideal surround us, without relief by atmosphere and distance. But there is not one of them that, as to its essence, was not present and in power when the Church was new. Think of those old beliefs everywhere in decay, material force asserting a collective tyranny over the individual, a wild lust of pleasure, a soulless culture, a monstrous wealth, a helpless and enormous poverty, an almost ubiquitous degeneration. Yet the saintship of men formed the one living omen of hope for the whole of society and of polity. It was a power working already for public regeneration through multiplied regenerations of wills and lives.

As then, so now. Let us embrace the ideal, at once so modest and so magnificent, of a life whose formative principle shall be that we belong to others, because first, supremely first, we belong to our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us 'possess our possessions' with a new mastery and joy, by bringing them, with ourselves, to His feet. There we shall learn to use them with all the power of an ambition, personal, yet pure because for Him. There we shall realize, and only there, something of the possibilities of the personality which is the shadow and image of His. There we shall become saints, not robed and aureoled in Minster windows, but living lights of help and hope in a greatly needing world.

'The saints of God, their conflict past!' It is good for us to salute them, some of them dear unspeakably to ourselves. But they all were first the saints of some Philippi here below, as we are called to be to-day.

[1] Coventry Patmore.

The Fellowship and the Gospel

Phil. i. 3-5.—'I thank my God . . . with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel' (R.V.).

Our watchwords for furthering any cause are 'enthusiasm' and 'organization'; St Paul's are 'joy' and 'fellowship.' In this difference lies the secret of his own amazing devotion to the gospel and of his faith in these poor, ignorant, imperfect fellow-workers of his as the adequate means for furthering it. To the great organized religions around, religions sanctioned by immemorial custom, housed in vast temples, and embodied in impressive rites, with the power of a State behind them which was universal, strong and ruthless, these Christian fellowships were foolish, weak, despised. Yet Paul believed them able to bring to naught even those things which so confidently and mightily were. Such confidence was possible only because he trusted a quite different order of power. Christianity was of less account than any other religion of the time either for stirring up enthusiasm to a passion or for showing an imposing front. But its followers had in them the breath of life, without which the mightiest institutions decay.

¶ When Gibbon tried to explain the rapid expansion of the Early Church he fastened upon five 'secondary causes,' and the fifth of them he called the union and discipline of the Christian republic. In that discovery he was not far wrong, and yet if Gibbon had really understood the nature of the Christian faith he would have phrased his discovery differently. The union and discipline of the Christian republic suggests something harsh and mechanical. It might be a union imposed by authorities from above or forced from around by circumstances. If he had read the New Testament with real understanding he would have said that the Church progressed in the way it did because it was a unique achievement in fellowship.[1]

St Paul was confident that the common possession of the gospel, with its gift of peace and hope, and its promise of a new humanity in a new earth, and a new heaven in the years to come, was itself sufficient to give these Christians the closest unity, which he calls fellowship. Nor is anything in his life more deserving of note than the absence of every effort to promote co-operation except by awak-

[1] F. H. Ballard.

ing this sense of joy in possessing a common good.

The very idea of fellowship is an inward spiritual relation: and with this meaning the word is used in the New Testament with a frequency and a precision which the English translation only imperfectly conveys. Partly, the word 'fellowship' has come in our language to mean little more than association; and, partly, the translators, influenced by this fact, substituted the word 'communion' in what they regarded as more solemn connections. But fellowship in the Early Church was always in the most solemn connection. It expressed the essential Christian relation to each other. To continue in the fellowship was the mark of a true believer, and the chief rite, the breaking of bread, was its seal and manifestation. Fellowship was also the essential relation of God's children to Himself, the 'fellowship of the Spirit' being their central religious experience. On this relation, which had been produced and maintained by the gospel, Paul placed all his hopes for furthering the gospel.

When you believe yourself well and vigorous by reason of your own constitution, you do not seek the same result by medicine; when you believe that the rain will abundantly water your field, you do not build irrigation dams; when you think a truth is abundantly proved by reason, you do not enforce it by law and penalties; when you believe men are taught of God, you do not wish to regulate their faith and actions by what you think proper. After this fashion Paul proved his faith in the Christian fellowship. He committed his trust to it so utterly that he took no account of the usual safeguards of organized societies.

1. The Apostle's first conviction concerned fellowship in the truth. All he said and did, and, still more, all he left unsaid and undone, in his relations with these humble believers, shows how sure was his conviction that they had each of them seen for themselves the same truth, and must, therefore, be one in faith. Though he had no illusions about either their ignorance or their weakness, nothing they ever thought or did shook his confidence of something in their hearts, of joyful possession of God's truth and of power by which the victory which alone is truly moral, the triumph of one's own soul over evil, could be won.

Converts from heathenism in Paul's time were just like converts from heathenism in our time. They only imperfectly cast off their old views, and the deepest things of the Christian faith they only imperfectly understood. The Gentile believers had no sacred writing. The Hebrews had the Old Testament, but they had been trained to read it with Rabbinical spectacles. Of the New Testament only a few of the Epistles had been written, and they were still read merely as private letters. The only source of instruction was the preaching and conversation of occasional itinerant teachers, which could not have been systematic. There was no form of creed. But we see from the Apostle's writings what he did rely on. His whole appeal was to a truth his readers had seen in Jesus Christ for themselves. This was very far from assuring the absence of all difference of view. There were differences which even threatened division, and which grieved him to the heart. But he never sought to overcome them by laying down forms upon which to agree. Even on a vital issue of what might seem plain ethical moment he is prepared to wait for agreement till it come of God's own revealing. Upon this truth of God's own revealing and man's own seeing he placed all his faith for the furthering of the gospel.

2. If unity in truth is the tap-root of fellowship which gives it strength and stability, the fibres which nourish it and keep it ever green are the loyalties and sympathies and forbearances which come from what the Apostle describes as having the same love, and being of united soul. He finds no figure interdependent enough to express the closeness of this relation except the members of one body: nor is any figure living and close enough for what maintains it except that the head of every one is Christ. When we are tempted to think his language too exalted for human nature, we should recall how this spirit manifested itself in the days before Christ's revelation of the Father had been enfeebled by admixture with the spirit of the world. For a time it obliterated all sense of private property, and later Paul was able to speak of the help given to the poorer brethren at Jerusalem, not as 'liberality,' as it is translated, but as 'the expression of fellowship.' A power which could break down the alienation between Jew and Greek might

justify the utmost exaltation of language. But still greater was the transformation of human relations by the gospel which made Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene sisters, Simon the zealot and Matthew the publican fellow-apostles, Paul the learned Jewish Rabbi and Onesimus the runaway Gentile slave father and son.

¶ 'The first lesson of Christianity,' says Viscount Bryce,[1] 'was love, a love that was to join in one body those whom suspicion and prejudice and pride of race had hitherto kept apart. Thus there was formed by the new religion a community of the faithful, a Holy Empire, designed to gather all men into its bosom, and standing opposed to the manifold polytheisms of the older world, exactly as the universal sway of the Cæsars was contrasted with the innumerable kingdoms and city republics that had gone before it.'

Occasional grave failures the Apostle makes no attempt to conceal. More especially it appeared in misuse of the ordinance which was the very symbol and bond of brotherhood. Though the essence of the Lord's Supper was to be one bread, one body, it was made the occasion for displaying abundance and forgetting need. Nothing could have been easier than to lay down a form of observance which would at once have removed all unseemliness. But the Apostle knew that the only real hindrance to the gospel was the absence of the spirit of the gospel, and, therefore, he gave all his strength to awaking it. In one word, his faith was in fellowship, not organization: and a fellowship is distinguished from an organization by being dependent, not upon visible uniformities, but upon a spirit of understanding, sympathy, patience and personal affection, in which men are not alienated because they differ.

3. Something more is necessary for growth than tap-root and fibres. They produce nothing without the coming of the Spring. And the gospel was for the Apostle just the call of the Spring, the rising of the sun above the storms and clouds of earth, which makes each one who lives under its influence put forth the special vital forces which God has implanted in him, so that the earth clothes itself in verdure and becomes a harmony of varied and abundant promise.

[1] *The Holy Roman Empire*, 92.

The gospel concerned nothing less than the coming of Christ's Kingdom, ruled by His method and for the ends He manifested. The gospel to be furthered was this good news of the Kingdom: and the fellowship did this by being a colony, an outpost, of it in the world. All its members were one in this service, not by visible arrangement, but by being, in the inmost loyalty of their hearts, citizens of it.

Let us remember that furthering the good news means actually getting people to live in the joy and emancipation and freedom of God's own presence, and that it is not furthered at all by merely imposing upon others statements about it which alter nothing either in themselves or in their world. Acquiescence is nothing; discovery is everything. Pressure is vain; fear is folly; anathema brutality: for good news, by its very nature, cannot be forced upon the mind, but must sing its way into the heart.

Does the world see in us to-day a great joy springing from a reality which unites us spontaneously in conviction, esteem, and service? Or does it see us concerning ourselves anxiously about the body of our fellowship, and not the creative power of its spirit? Is the only practical outcome of our religion, as the world says, routine services, merely negative moralities which challenge none to consider or to imitate, and under the influence of which our churches become dull clubs, not inspired brotherhoods? Is it because the good-news of Jesus Christ, with His fellowship with the Father and, through it, with His children, is an unreality, that these things have not in Him ceased to be? Or is it only because, as a matter of fact, we have had, even in religion, our trust in man's devices, and have not yet, in spite of our long, sorrowful experience, learned that we cannot build any better society upon a less enduring foundation than a fellowship which we enter as we live in God's truth, are one in His spirit, and serve in His Kingdom?

We all are servants of one Master, Christ;
Bound by one law, redeemed by one love,
And every brow sealed with the self-same print
Of blessèd brotherhood.

Christianity as Fellowship

Phil. i. 5.—'For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.'

The whole world is suffering from lack of fellowship. The Church also needs it. Men are asking us to-day not so much for orthodox teaching, correct ceremonial, as for real fellowship.

What is the meaning of this great word? Look at this letter to the Philippians. It is not a doctrinal Epistle. It is not a disciplinary Epistle. It is a kindly letter written by a wise, far-seeing man to a band of his converts who were trying to maintain the Apostle's fellowship. He uses the word, here and elsewhere, concerning our friendship with God and our friendship with Christ, our friendship with one another in and through Christ. It is a word which, when we perceive its import, thrills us with all that is deepest and most tender in our relationships. It is a rich, spacious word, full of suggestiveness. It does not mean identity; but it does mean identification. Of St Paul and his followers it is true to say that their aims were one; their hopes were one; their efforts were one. Difference of temperament, difference of employment, difference of station, difference of opinion, but all bound up in one common centre, all contributing to a common loyalty, all inspired by a common purpose. Fellowship with God means to have all things in common with God. Fellowship among men means to have all things in common with men. Not identity, but identification—fellowship, communion, partnership. Here, then, is a great sacrament—a symbol of an invisible unity, a word full of inspiration and help.

1. What is the underlying quality of this wonderful word? It is 'Love.' When we say that we go to the heart of the matter. Love produces fellowship. Religion moves round the thought of Love. God so loved the world that He gave—He gave Himself. And our Lord said—'He that loseth his life shall save it.' His words confront us, and also His own example of untiring service for men. All around us are men and women with the Divine image in them defaced by sin; squalor, ignorance, misery, disease—the cry of them goes up to heaven, and must send a pang into the Divine heart of Love. Let us pray for a clearer vision of what a redeemed humanity might mean and for the will to bear the common burden. We win a richer life if we are unselfish. If we are taken out of ourselves in service for others, our whole life becomes happier and more vigorous. Life always gains by expansion. The plant's cycle of life is completed when it has set its seed.

¶ David Hill returned to Wusueh invigorated and cheered, and soon after, in June 1877, he wrote the following letter to his brother: 'As to help to the poor, I find that here in Wusueh these representatives of our King come right before me, and the thought comes home that I ought to do something for them. The sight of suffering poverty is very touching, very mysterious, very sad. If we saw and knew as much of it as Jesus did, we should be men of sorrows too; and the real philosophy of life is to live near to it, mix with those burdened with it, and, as far as we can, relieve it.'

It is impossible to pass over silently David Hill's 'real philosophy of life'—'to live near suffering poverty, mix with those burdened with it, and as far as possible relieve it.' Such a philosophy goes deep to the heart of things. Directly we begin to care greatly for the needs of others, in this absorbing interest we lose insensibly the desire to cushion our own life in ease and seek our own comforts, and we find that the highest and most unselfish ideals have the greatest return, lead to the widest outlook, to the deepest experiences, to the most perfect joys.[1]

Christian love is not weak sentiment, but something strong and robust—a powerful energy. It is best defined as respect for the personality of others and desire to help them. We should put no obstacles in the way of their true growth. And if there are things in their lives or their surroundings which hinder them from developing we should try at all costs to have these removed. We should realize the sacredness of human personality, and should strive to train that personality to grow to the full height of its powers. What counts in God's sight is not social conventions or class distinctions or the artificial barriers we set up between man and man; God's eye pierces right through all these and sees the common humanity in us all. Our fundamental needs are the same. A common burden of temptation and sorrow falls on us all.

[1] J. E. Hellier, *Life of David Hill*, 98.

We all need sympathy, we all need redemption from sin. We are all children of the One Father, each one different from all the rest, yet similar in make and structure. God has put love into every heart, and He bids us let that love have free play and spend itself in service for others.

¶ Dr Maldwyn Hughes refers, in one of his books, to the fact that Earl Grey wrote of his father, a former Governor-General of Canada, 'He lit so many fires in cold rooms,' and, commenting on this, Dr Hughes says, 'That is a beautiful epitaph to have merited. No one of us need desire that anything better be said of us at the end of the day.'

2. What were the features of the early Christians' fellowship?

(1) It was *a fellowship of prayer*. 'These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.' Paul tells us how he was 'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.' He feels that as he draws near to the throne of God he is very near to his Philippian brethren and can make their joys and sorrows his own. This is the nature of real prayer; in bringing us near to God it brings us near to all our loved ones, it brings us near to all the saints of God. All those who really pray to God through Christ are by that very act bound into a spiritual family.

Of all his helpers perhaps the most valued by the Apostle, because they contributed largely to the furtherance of the gospel, are those whom he describes as 'helping together by supplication' (2 Cor. i. 11). Often we express our wonder at the scantiness of the results of so much labour. But what moves the wonder of God may be that in some churches there are so few intercessors. The truth expressed so pathetically by Christina Rossetti may well incite us all to cherish the spirit of intercession—

The sinner's own fault? So it was.

. . . . . .

Clearly his own fault. Yet I think
My fault in part, who did not pray
But lagged and would not lead the way.
I, haply, proved his missing link.
God help us both to mend and pray.

(2) It was *a fellowship of suffering*. It had upon it the red marks of persecution. First the Jew and then the Gentile harried the Christians from place to place, and the Church was hardly born before it began to form its roll of heroes. In the allegory of the Vine and the Branches the first truth we see is that the branches belong to each other because they belong to the same stem, and one sap nurtures them all. But there is an additional lesson, which is sometimes missed. The vine may be called the most patient and most suffering of plants. It is ruthlessly pruned with the one object of making it yield as much fruit as possible. All unnecessary growth of leaf or tendril is shorn away. Beauty is sacrificed to utility. It endures that it may serve.

The Vine from every living limb bleeds wine:
Is it the poorer for that spirit shed?
The drunkard and the wanton drink thereof:
Are they the richer for that gift's excess?
Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth.
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
And whoso suffers most hath most to give.[1]

(3) It was *a fellowship of adventure*. How typical is Acts xiii., where the Church at Antioch is described in a few words, and we see Simeon and Lucius and Manaen and the rest sending away Barnabas and Paul on a new enterprise to Cyprus. The Church was always taking up new enterprises in thought and action—not playing for safety, but venturing out into the unknown.

¶ Religion is often looked on as a kind of insurance to avoid the chance of future loss. Or it is thought of as a way of escape from compassing ills, a way of making life safe from menacing dangers. 'Safety first,' however, cannot adequately describe religion, if in its very essence it is an adventure of the spirit. It is the drive and urge of vital force beyond the seen and tangible. Even in a material sense we see this in every great religious movement. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is a story of amazing spiritual adventure, not only for single souls like Paul, but for groups of common men. We see the weak things of the world go out to master the strong, to meet Greek philosophy and Roman government, to turn the world upside down. They deserted

[1] H. E. Hamilton King, *The Disciples*.

from the known and usual, and took noble risks.[1]

(4) It was *an inclusive fellowship*. There are, and always have been, plenty of exclusive associations in which men unite to defend their own interests. That, by the way, is a conspicuous difference between the communism of the Early Church and the Communism of today. The Church is not a society for the defence of privileges, but a fellowship for the propagation of truth and the salvation of all sorts and conditions of men. Instead of having boundaries to keep men out it has a magnetic centre to draw men in, and all who are drawn to the centre are necessarily drawn to one another. That magnetic centre is Jesus Christ Himself—not a doctrine about Him, not a mere ideal, but a Person. It was Christ who made the apostolic bond of unity. It was Christ who prompted the prayers of the Pentecostal Church and supported them in suffering, and thrust out missionaries on voyages of adventure and took away the walls of partition between man and man, and man and God. There could have been no achievement of Christian fellowship apart from Him.

Confidence in God

Phil. i. 6.—'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'

We are familiar with the beginnings of the Philippian Church from the vivid account in the Book of the Acts. And now within a few years its spiritual progress has been so great that the Apostle can write of this Church as his 'joy and crown.' But all this was only a beginning. The 'goal' was yet a great way off. Would they ever reach it? 'I am confident,' says the Apostle, 'that he who has begun the good work in you will finish it.' In this one illuminating sentence the Apostle expresses at once his own personal belief in the ultimate perfection of the Christian character of his friends at Philippi and his conviction of the validity of a great Christian principle which has no limitation of range. God, he says, will complete the good work He begins in human souls.

1. This idea, that a beginning which is obviously Divine cannot fall back into failure, runs like a golden thread through Scripture. It is one of the first flashes of the hope of immortality in the Old Testament. Job, driven from the narrow haven of the faith of his time, dragging his anchor desperately before the tempest of his troubles, finds holding-ground of hope here. He would welcome death, for something tells him death is not the end. He is the work of God's hands, which death would leave incomplete. 'Thou wilt have a desire,' he cries, 'to the work of thine own hands.'

The devotion of the Psalmist ends his prayer with this plea, 'Forsake not the work of thine own hands.' The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sees the fact of the unfinished, and finds guarantee of its promise in Jesus: 'We see not yet all things under him, but we see Jesus.' And to St Paul the whole creation seems to groan and agonize to something not yet achieved, and he speaks of 'the earnest expectation of the creation.'

¶ The chapel of San Lorenzo at Florence contains the monuments which Michael Angelo executed in memory of the Medici, his princely patrons. On one of these tombs the sculptor has carved two reclining figures, to represent respectively the Night and the Day. Night is personified as a woman, sunk in deep yet uneasy slumber; while Day is portrayed in the shape of a man who lifts himself in the attitude of wrathful and disturbed awakening. But the figure of Day has been left unfinished. The limbs indeed are partly chiselled, while the head and face are merely blocked out of the marble. Some interruption stayed the master's hand, and he left his work imperfect and incomplete. Now that half-finished statue in San Lorenzo is like a parable of our human nature. There is the same pathetic sense of incompleteness, the same dumb prophecy of a perfection intended and required. The sculptor's ideal seems vainly struggling to free itself from its stony shroud; and the marble lips might cry out in mute reproach, beseeching him to perfect that which concerned them, to forsake not the work of his own hands.[1]

Modern scientific teaching immensely reinforces this thought by its teaching of evolution, and the conception of creation as yet incomplete, as part of which by painful stages we have been brought from vague beginnings to the point at which we now stand. Science endorses

[1] Hugh Black, *The Adventure of Being Man*, 60.

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 265.

the Scriptural verdict of 'not yet,' and our own self-knowledge tells us of the brute which lingers in our being's recesses, and the clay of the far beginnings which clogs our feet. To this faith assents; and, adding 'But we see Jesus,' tells us that Jesus is the supreme lifting force, and, pointing to God's hand upon the clay, it heartens us with the thought that 'God's greatness flows around our incompleteness.'

To remember the fact that our best is incomplete is to save ourselves from a great folly. To remember this in respect of Christian doctrine is to have the humility of faith. Certain things we all see clearly, but this we ought to see also, that the sum of Christian knowledge is but a fraction of the unsearchable riches of Christ. We must learn to take into our thought of Christian truth Sir Isaac Newton's famous remark regarding science, 'We are like children who have been able to pick up a few shells on the shore of an infinite sea.'

¶ Spurgeon, whose faith walked with no uncertain tread, once said: 'Tell me the death of the Lord Jesus was a grand example of self-sacrifice. I can see that, and far more. Tell me it was the bearing of what ought to have been borne by myriads of sinners of the human race. I can see that, and found my best hopes upon it; but do not tell me that this is all that is in the Cross.'

2. The Apostle is confident that God, having entered into human life, will complete the work He has begun. It seems a truism, it seems almost an irreverence. God could do no other than a thorough work. And yet it is doubtful if that truth has the value of an absolute fact for us. God's grasp of the life that yields to Him never relaxes. No man can flutter out of the Father's hand. That may look like an unconditioned optimism; but let us be under no illusion as to the measure of our responsibility. The Christian theory of Providence is not an unconditioned optimism; it is optimism with a proviso. 'All things work together for good.' It takes a very naïve or a very unethical philosophy to stop there. Has life no tragedy, no tears, no sin? Are there no inexorable laws of truth and justice and generosity? The Christian optimism says, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' We are called to co-operate with Him. God loves all men, and He condemns none who is not wilfully ignorant of Him; and soon or late He will give all a chance of knowing Him. But for us there is the question: What is our attitude to Christ?

Our optimism is nothing more than the simple consequence of God's gracious thoroughness. It is His deliberate purpose to complete up to the point of transfiguration every good work to which He has put His hand. Every such work in the souls of men, in the discipline and ministry of His Church, in the life of the nations, in the history of humanity—every such work will come to the day of Christ an accredited and accomplished work, pure enough and vital enough to find some lofty function in the Kingdom which shall have no end.

If there be—to come back to the personal aspect of the matter—any good thing, any wistful sense of the majesty and love of Jesus, any self-lowliness and shame of sin, any voice of prayer, any dawning even of a better life, then it is God's steadfast purpose to cultivate and purify and perfect these things. And for that end He may give us many teachers, but He will ever be the patient Teacher Himself. He will, if we follow Him, astonish us by the incalculable surprises of His own loving guidance and care. God has many instruments, and fashions many minds for the helping on of His great work, but no single order or tradition or individual is indispensable; only God is indispensable. In the end we are, according to the phrase of St Paul, His workmanship.

¶ It is not God's way to do things by halves. Not seldom an earthly artist can be hindered or distracted from his task. Sometimes he will fling down the tools in impatience and despair. Old age must paralyse his hand in a few years at most. But the Divine Worker fainteth not, neither is weary. His patience is like His mercy, it endureth for ever; and He has all eternity to finish in. Sometimes we describe a man by comparing him to a rough diamond. And that surely implies that his character needs a great deal of cutting and grinding and polishing. But it means also that God the Owner sees something in that man which is worth taking infinite pains over—something which He will never 'cast as rubbish to the void,' but will go on to discipline through much tribulation until He has made it at last what He means it to be.

¶ As an architectural achievement Cologne Cathedral doubtless is the expression of a sublime idea. The history of its erection also is singular and significant, and its formal completion in 1880 was a great event. The first stone was laid in 1248, and notwithstanding the lapse of all these centuries, including long periods of forgetfulness, neglect and intentional delay, the building was finished according to the original plan. The thought of that one man, Gerhard von Riehl, who was laid to rest more than half a millennium before, had been carried out from the ground plan to the loftiest arch and the last pinnacle. So that this Cathedral will always stand as an impressive illustration of the persistent vitality of a true, harmonious and beautiful idea.[1]

3. There is another reason why St Paul's utterance was so confident—that derived from his view of the day of Jesus Christ. The day to which all things are moving is the day of Jesus Christ. We need not disguise from ourselves the fact that the people who received this letter from Paul expected within their own generation the Second Coming of Christ, and they were mistaken in that hope. And yet the day to which all things are moving is the day of Christ.

Some of us may see that day afar off, but we all can lay to heart, as, indeed, we must, this immutable certainty, that to Him all creation and history are moving. He must judge the nations; He must judge His Church; He must judge our hearts. He is the goal of all progress; He is the crown of all life. In looking for that day we are one with all saints. They died in the faith of it. The radiance about their lives was there simply because on the summit of hope they caught the reflection of Christ's coming glory. Their very deeds were made pure by His far-flashing splendour. Their sorrows held forward with outstretched hands to the light of Christ's face. In pity for the world they prayed and toiled for its renewal in godliness and in peace; and they subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness and obtained promises and stopped the mouths of lions, because their hearts were cheered by voices of the morning. And in the impotence of all earthly language to express the future they prayed for and believed in they were content to know that the great day was to be Christ's day. They knew Him; they were sure of His Kingdom, and it was enough for faith.

[1] F. Cowles.

The More Excellent Way

Phil. i. 9, 10.—'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent' (R.V.).

One of the most beautiful elements in the Pauline Epistles is the intimate relation which evidently existed between the Apostle and his converts. This is especially the case in the Epistle to the Philippians, for in no other writing is there such a full revelation of the heart of St Paul and of his love to those with whom he was united in Christ. As, therefore, he knew them so intimately, so he prayed for them, the prayer revealing at once their need and his conviction as to essential things. The main petition of the prayer is a petition for love. 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more.' Love, the characteristic Christian grace, already had its place in the hearts of these Philippian Christians, and St Paul here prays that that love may abound yet more and more, that it may continuously become deeper and richer and fuller.

1. We speak of love sometimes as if it were a mere sentiment, a mere emotion. Though why we should speak of a *mere* emotion it is hard to conceive. The very word ought to have saved us from such a foolish collocation. Emotion can never be 'mere,' since it is that which moves us to some course of action. There is no mental characteristic of our age more short-sighted than our disparagement of feeling and emotion. The average man is oftener moved to action by his emotions than he is by his reason. Indeed, men are never moved to vigorous and effective action until their affections and emotions are engaged. Certainly, love was not to the Apostle a mere sentiment. It was a force, a power, an energy. It drove men to action. 'The love of Christ constraineth me.' And it not only drove men to action; it had also a mighty effect on character. It cleansed the heart; it illumined the mind; it made the spirit sensitive. It is this particular effect of love that the Apostle has

chiefly in his mind here. 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment.' 'Knowledge' deals with general principle; 'discernment' with practical application. We might state what is in the Apostle's mind by saying that love increases the sensitiveness and accuracy of our moral perceptions. When moral issues present themselves we see more clearly, and we choose more surely. Knowledge and discernment are born of love. Love is not blind; it is sight. It is the gateway to the highest knowledge. It is so even on ordinary human levels. A man must have a love for art if he is ever to become an artist or even to understand and appreciate art. A man must love music if he is ever to know what good music is. And a man must love his fellows if he is to understand them. You will never get a fair or true account of a man from someone who is opposed to him. It is not, perhaps, that the opponent wishes to be unfair, it is simply that he does not know.

¶ Objection was raised to John Morley as the biographer of Gladstone on the ground that he had no sympathy with Gladstone on his religious side. And, though in the issue Morley produced a biography which deserves the epithet 'great,' it is open to question whether Gladstone is fully portrayed in it, for religion was the most vital element in his life, and that Morley was not able to understand.

¶ Browning tells the story of Andrea del Sarto, who was a famous painter in Florence. In his youth he married a woman of rare beauty. She was, however, a shallow-minded, superficial creature. She was the woman who, with a careless swing of her skirt, smeared the noble picture he had painted in hours of great spiritual ecstasy. It was she who filled his life with disappointment. Not that she robbed his hand of its deftness, or his mind of its genius, or his soul of its inspiration. The tragedy was a domestic one; she was heart blind. She never understood the moral majesty of his mind, and the love hunger of his heart, and in consequence he could not disclose to her his noblest and best self.[1]

It is only the lovers who really see and understand. And it is just like that in the moral and spiritual realm. When the fishers had tossed all night and taken nothing, and the grey dawn was breaking on the beach, it was the eye of him who loved that discerned the figure of the Master standing beside the fire of coals, and *John* said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' And not only does love make a man sensitive to the presence of the Lord, but it refines the whole character; it puts a fine edge on the spirit, so that a man becomes ever quicker to know the Lord's will and to respond to it. That is why Augustine wrote that sentence which sounds so daring, 'Love God and do what you like'; for if a man loves God he will know what things are beautiful and pure and true, and only such things will he choose to do.

2. St Paul desired this gift of knowledge and discernment for his converts for a definite practical reason—'that ye may approve the things that are excellent.' The Revised Version reads in the margin, 'that ye may prove the things that differ.' The refinement of their moral perceptions which would come through increase of love would enable the Philippians the more clearly to distinguish between truth and falsehood, right and wrong. Lightfoot, however, objects that it does not require any very keen moral perception to distinguish between right and wrong, and so he translates, not 'that ye may prove the things that differ,' but 'that ye may approve the things that transcend.' It is not so much a case of distinguishing the good from the bad as of distinguishing the better from the merely good.

There are degrees in fineness and delicacy of taste. That is so on the ordinary levels of life. Some are quite satisfied with the merely good; others will be content with nothing short of the very best. Take literature, for example. There are those who are content with the average output of the press; there are others who can find satisfaction only in the works of the immortals. The average man is satisfied with music which is quite obvious and plain. But the man of fine musical taste revels in the mighty harmonies of Bach and Beethoven. Or take Nature. There are some who are frankly bored by Nature's widespreading spaces. They want movement, excitement, sensation. There are others to whom mountain and glen and moor and sea and the silence that is among the lonely hills bring unspeakable delight.

Now, there are similar differences of appreciation and taste between men when we pass from the realms of art and literature and music into

[1] S. J. Hoban.

that of religion. Some men are content with the good; and some are content only with the best. We have an old saying to the effect that 'the good is the enemy of the best.' So it is. People are content to pass muster. They are satisfied with a Christianity that is more or less of a veneer. But Paul covets for his converts not the good but the best; not a Christianity that is little more than profession, but a Christianity that expresses itself in fine and beautiful living. One reason why the Christian faith has made so small an impression on the world is that we ourselves are such second-rate Christians. The world does not see Christianity as the fine and exquisite thing it really is. We are content with the good; we have not sought the best. For there *is* a good and a best. One man may do a good thing, but another may do the same thing with so fine a grace that he invests it with an absolutely new glory, so that the good thing becomes an excellent thing. Take the matter of giving, for illustration. One man will offer a gift, but he will at the same time either complain of the multiplicity of calls, or indulge in so much scolding that the recipient is hurt and bruised and but for his desperate need would like to fling the gift back at him. Again and again we take all the grace off actions in themselves good by the way in which we do them: 'We practise one virtue at the expense of another.' Christian people should strive not only to do the good things but to do them in a fine way, with such a grace as will convert them into excellent things.

¶ One can understand why the little girl prayed, 'O God, make all the bad people good'; and then added, 'and make all the good people nice.' Paul made exactly the same distinction when he said that scarcely for a righteous man would one die, but for a good man one would even dare to die. The righteous man is the man who is merely good and just, the good man is gracious and helpful as well.[1]

¶ It is said that Carlyle's wife some years before her death wrote in her diary, 'My husband has always been just to me—coldly just, but I am dying in his home for want of love.'

And may we not illustrate the truth by reference to the Christian life in general? There is a conventional view of the Christian life—that it means joining the membership of a church, attending worship regularly, avoiding anything in the nature of open and flagrant sin, doing the decent thing in the way of benevolence and charity. That is the popular idea of what Christianity means. But how far removed that is from the New Testament conception! For to be a Christian in the New Testament is to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; it is to follow Jesus to the place of prayer and the place of service, and the place of sacrifice. Roman Catholics seem to take it for granted that the Christian life in its fullness is impossible to men and women who play their part in the workaday world. They confine the term 'religious' to those who give themselves up to lives of devotion. But it is in the world that our Lord means us to take up our cross and follow Him. It is in the world He means us to live the life of sacrificial love. Christ is not satisfied with the good; He wants the excellent.

3. What an impression we should make upon the world if, of two possible and legitimate courses of action, we always chose the nobler, and if we did our noble things in a gracious way! But how can we arrive at such a sensitiveness and refinement of moral perception? The text supplies the answer—by abounding in love more and more. There are three stages in the sequence as the Apostle traces it—enlarging love, knowledge and discernment, the choice of the excellent. Trace it backwards. The approval of the excellent depends upon enlarging love. The more we abound in love the more closely we shall walk with God, and the more closely we walk with Him the more deeply we shall enter into His mind and will, the more completely shall we share in His outlook. The man who enters into the love of God—its length and breadth and height and depth—as revealed in the Cross of His Son will not want a cheap and easy Christian life, a life that costs him nothing. He will be ready for the life of sacrificial service, and he will count the sacrifice a joy.

[1] J. D. Jones.

The Choices of Life

Phil. i. 10.—'That ye may approve things that are excellent.'

Life is a succession of choices, and success in life depends upon the right choice. These

choices demand discrimination. We have to distinguish not only the obviously good from bad, but among good things, good from best. This is the finesse of the game of life, in which lies the secret of all true culture. There are a thousand little points of manner, speech, thought, and action in which both of two possible courses are justifiable, but one is the finer course, and belongs to the things which are excellent. This prayer is for a type of character founded upon the habitual choice of such things.

¶ In one of the most beautiful and yet most searching passages of the sixth book of his *Confessions*, Rousseau relates how he asked himself in what manner he might make the most of the brief interval which stood between the present and the day of his death. And it was Victor Hugo who said that every man and woman is under sentence of death with 'a sort of indefinite reprieve.' Well, death may not matter—does not matter—but the way in which we use the reprieve and the choices which we must inevitably make during the reprieve—that matters tremendously![1]

1. Let us consider some of the *qualities* necessary for making the choice.

(1) It first of all requires *appreciation*—to know what one desires and to desire rightly. If it be important to learn how to say No, it is still more important to learn how to say Yes, and to say it emphatically. For, even in so unsatisfactory a world as this, there are things which are excellent—things that are 'true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.' Some people are turning over large heaps of them to find the unpleasant things below, but that does not alter the fact. If our world of thought and choice is ugly and second-rate, that is neither God's fault nor the world's, but our own. The world is strewn with the good gifts of God, and it is a great and wise thing to look around us with chaste desire and loving eye, and to see and appreciate what is excellent.

(2) Yet appreciation must be balanced with *criticism*, for in a world like this there is a very manifest limit to approval, and criticism, no less than appreciation, is a distinctively Christian duty. Marius the Epicurean recognized in his Christian friend 'some inward standard of distinction, selection, refusal, amid the various elements of the fervid and corrupt life' around them. Even in literature, as Pater elsewhere insists, the best work depends upon the art of cutting off surplusage; and all finest things, like the diamond, gain their beauty by sacrifice of precious dust. This necessity of criticism is true even to the length of a positive duty of hatred. Fra Angelico is famous as the man who could not paint a devil, and no one can withhold the tribute of reverence for so pure a spirit. Yet, if there are devils there, such a view of life as his can never be a true picture of the world. Browning's great words are eternally true:

> Dante, who loved well because he hated,
> Hated wickedness that hinders loving.

All strong souls know what that means. It is the secret of moral and spiritual robustness, and it is a principle which Jesus Christ illustrated in Himself and taught to His disciples.

Yet, while this is true, our part is not to select the evil elements for emphasis, or to accept the world in its breadth, going in good-naturedly with everything. In character and affections the ideal is not that of mere enthusiastic persons, who are friends of all the world, with a vulgar heat of indiscriminate praise. A more austere way of dealing with life is expected of us. Christianity is not all kindliness and fervour. It is severely discriminating judgment also, and thought founded on knowledge. There is no real fear that knowledge will cool love: love is cooled rather by ignorance and carelessness.

(3) Thus Christian character also involves *selection*, not only of obvious right in contrast with wrong, but of the finest kind of right and that which is fittest for the special occasion. To reject open immorality and to accept all the rest without discrimination is respectability, the religion of the Pharisees. There is a scale of fineness among things respectable, and Christ insists that we shall not be content with a second-best, though it be good. In this way He has produced a special type of man, more delicately sensitive in choices than the rest. Such men, whose spirit habitually dwells among the highest things, show a rare spiritual culture, an aristocracy of spirit, which partly explains Christ's insistence on the narrow way and the strait gate, and the few that find it.

[1] H. D. M'Keehan, *The Patrimony of Life*, 66.

2. There are certain great *difficulties* in the way of those who would seek for this excellence.

(1) In lower regions of thought and conduct the law judges for us, but here the responsibility falls back upon ourselves. And at once we have to meet with those fashions in moral and spiritual things whose standards for the time being set the type and frame the unwritten laws which govern the mass of society. In Cromwell's time strength was the ideal of England, in Dryden's time good nature. Now it is the courtier, now the nun, who seems most perfectly to embody human excellence. Such fashions make a very subtle appeal to the vanity of many who have not the courage to be counted peculiar. To others the temptation is to be in opposition. Thus the chief demand is for moral and spiritual originality; to have a mind of one's own, and a conscience of one's own, which will enable one to discover and choose excellence for oneself.

(2) A deeper difficulty in the way of seekers after excellence is the fact that even the best of them are to so lamentable an extent the 'familiar friends of sin' that it has become interesting and attractive to them, while goodness has come to seem insipid. It is so easy to get into the way of counting upon evil for interest, and imitating our cheapest literature by presenting the lower side of life in lights that quicken curiosity rather than revulsion. Thus we have perverted our standards of interest, and allowed our tastes to become corrupt, until we instinctively prefer the lower to the higher. This holds along the whole line of moral and spiritual choices, and it has degraded men's attitude toward Jesus Christ Himself. Men turn from Him, not so much because they are afraid of the fascination of a beauty so rare, but because they have actually looked upon Him and felt no fascination.

¶ Katherine Mansfield's death at thirty-three was one of the great losses sustained by the literary world in recent years. It was no less a loss for morals than for letters. She had such a winsome way of making goodness appear attractive! How much she might have accomplished had she been spared to us is apparent from an article on 'Talks with Katherine Mansfield,' by Mr A. R. Ovage, in the *Century Magazine*. 'I have found my idea,' she said on the day before she died. 'I can,' says Mr Ovage, 'only record fragments and the final impression in her mind. Briefly, the conclusion was this: To make the commonplace virtues as attractive as ordinarily the vices are made; to present the good as the witty, the adventurous, the romantic, the gay, the alluring, and the evil as the platitudinous, the dull, the conventional, the solemn, and the unattractive.'[1]

3. In the face of such obstacles we turn anxiously to inquire as to the secret of that right instinct which will recognize excellence and choose it. The discouraging element in all this is that to so large an extent the reasons that lie behind our choice seem to be so largely out of our own power. 'Taste is morality,' says Ruskin; and certainly that is true of the high moral and spiritual region. But then, taste is not a matter of prescribed rules, which can be enforced or made convincing to a mind that does not spontaneously admit its canons. Thus it appears to be a hopeless quest except for the select few who possess it; as unattainable as the shape of features or the colour of eyes. King Arthur pronounced the quest of the Grail too high for many of his knights, and plainly told them that they were neither Galahads nor Parsifals. So, for many of us, the most excellent things seem too fine.

Yet that is not so true as it seems. Instincts may be acquired and tastes rectified within a lifetime. Those who live worthily among plain and ordinary issues come in the end to a spontaneous and immediate discernment of the lower and the higher ways. Still more surely is instinct affected by the moral discipline of life. He who faithfully and always chooses the course which seems to him right gains in moral perception, and passes on from cruder to finer discernment. But above all there is the power of love, which is the only power in all the world that is delicate enough to create the instinct for excellence. That was Jesus Christ's secret long before it was Paul's. He set love free upon the earth, and the effects of that new love were wonderful indeed to the world, and not less surprising to those into whose hearts it had entered. For, in the secret alchemy of God, they found that in their souls love was transmuted into knowledge. Loving much, and knowing themselves greatly loved, they arrived at an accurate and direct sense of the

[1] *Methodist Recorder*, 13th Nov. 1924.

distinction between what was finer and what was poorer. It is not too much to say that all the more delicate judgments of the world have arisen out of Christian love, which leads all who are faithful to it towards the approval of the things that are excellent.

A Sense of What is Vital

Phil. i. 10.—'That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.'

'THAT ye may approve things that are excellent,' or, as Dr Moffatt renders it, 'Enabling you to have a sense of what is vital.' The ability to distinguish between what is essential and what is unimportant in matters of faith and of conduct; to refrain from exalting secondary things into the place of first importance and letting slip the really essential things—such is St Paul's prayer for these Philippians.

1. So long as we have no instinct for what is vital, we are sure to make a bungle of our life. For living a life is like building a house. We have only a certain space with which to work; and everything depends on what we do with it. If we squander it in long and draughty passages, and leave only a bunk for a dining-room, and closets for bedrooms; if we forget all about the pantries and the keeping-places—well, then, we fail. And when God comes and looks at our life, might He not say, 'But you have left out everything that matters—have wasted your space sadly. This character that you have built is little use to Me'? We must get down to the essential things, and concentrate on them.

If that is so the point for us is, What is vital? What does the New Testament say? To begin, if we are to come through the wild weather which we are certain to meet before our voyage is over, we must have a reasonable reading of this difficult world of ours, of the slaps of fate, inscrutable providences, call them what you will, that are certain to befall us all before the end. It is too late to insure our house when it is already ablaze. It is vital, says the Testament, that we have some solution of these things ready for use over against the day when on us, too, they will leap out. At present, indeed, we may feel no pressing need for that. For ours so far is summer weather, and these rumours of tragic things come blown to us as from an infinitely distant world; like news of a disaster somewhere in the heart of China, from which we turn, looking for something in the paper that concerns us and has human interest. Life to us is a good gift, rich and full and crowded with interest; and we enjoy every moment of it. And we do right. Joy is a very worshipful thing. After all the benefits that He has heaped upon us, it is surely the least that we can do to bring to God a glad face and a happy spirit.

And yet it is a true picture that in this sunny earth of ours there is a mass of trouble past all believing. Round about us there are stunned minds looking out ahead without a notion how they are to struggle through, and hearts so sore it is all but unbearable, and souls tired and tried and tempted. And to us also it will come one day. And when it comes, what then? Is it to be allowed to break, to crush, to harden us? Is our easy faith, that has never been tried as yet, to die away in peevishness? Are we to fling religion from us, crying, Love! and how can God be love in face of brutal facts like these? It is vital, say the Scriptures, that we think out in time some solution of it all that will enable us to face it when it comes, as come it surely must, with a heart, sore indeed, but unconquered, indomitable, unafraid.

¶ Didon's mother died in a dreadful agony of months that wrung her son's very soul. 'I was hoping,' he wrote, 'that the last years of her life would be spared from suffering. But I was thinking of her with a son's love. God's love has decided otherwise, and I believe in God's love.'

'The aim and end of all the religions,' says Goethe, 'is to help men to meet the inevitable.' Certainly, all the thinkers hurry to our help. But nobody can steady us like Jesus Christ. If it be true that, as He says, this life of ours is an education for some task either here or later; that it is not really cruel even when it hurts intolerably; that there is meaning in it, though we can see none; and love in it, though assuredly it does not look like love; and honour in it, for God is treating us as He did Jesus Christ, making us, too, perfect through discipline and suffering, endowing us with such courage and sympathy and understanding and character as will enable us to be serviceable to Him and to our fellows; then, even if it is sore, we can make shift to see it through. James of

Harvard, asking what religion does for one, makes answer that, among other things, 'It gives a splendour to what must be borne in any case.' The Cross had to be faced. But the way in which Christ met it transformed it into the crowning glory of the world. And so it is, in measure, with all those ills and troubles that come to us. They have to be faced in any case. But religion can ennoble them; or rather through them we can win nobility.

2. Then, if we are to live our life aright, we must have a high enough conception of it, must range in their real order of relative importance the various ends and aims to which we can put it, and choose wisely between them. That is not easy. Many rob God of what they could give Him, through an undue diffidence that looks contemptuously at its little store of seventy years, and the dull routine of trivial things in which they must be spent, as at a coin so small that it is not worth offering. That, says Christ, is a very common sin of ordinary people with no special aptitude or gifts; while cleverer, happier, more amply endowed folk are apt to become confused by God's very liberality towards them. Life is so full and appetizing and enjoyable that they seek for nothing more, forgetting that they are great creatures, with a great life, which they ought to use greatly. It is vital, say the Scriptures, that we think of our life worthily.

¶ Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling; not a mean and grovelling thing that we are to shuffle through, as we can, but an elevated and noble destiny.[1]

Present-day novelists, as a class, will have it that it is little better than a vulgar squabble of ugly passions; and that what one really needs as one's equipment for success is to develop one's selfishness and self-indulgence, one's teeth and claws, and so bite one's way through to what one wants. But look at Jesus Christ, and His wonderful reading of it all. He takes that little life of ours into His hand, and, as He looks at it, His eyes grow full of a great awe. There has never been a time, He says, when God was not thinking of this, planning for it, working towards it. And, now that it is here, are we to throw it away on some poor tawdry ambition or narrow dream of our own comfort?

[1] Gladstone.

It is not only a question of the eternal as against the temporal. 'There may be heaven,' says Browning, 'there must be hell, meantime there is this earth here.' Yes, there is this life here. And, long or brief, what are we going to do with it? We shall have many claimants clamouring for our patronage, and all of them will have something to say. He might, says Scripture, have 'enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a season.' For sin does have its pleasures, of a kind, and for a season. Selfishness will shout the loudest, telling us that it is our own life, and we should spend it on ourself. The world will have its gifts to offer us—real gifts, though very fleeting. And yet before we close with anything they have to give or say, study the records of those who have been most avid in their service of such lords, and see that, if the wages of sin is death, those of the world are boredom and satiety and a too tardy recognition that these hearts of ours are far too stately and too spacious to be filled with such poor prizes. Before you decide, listen to the New Testament. Would you not like to live like this? it says, and shows us Jesus Christ. And when we look at Him, do we not feel the thrill and glamour of that glorious life to which He leads?

¶ Cynewulf, the old poet, has a wonderful picture of the Day of Judgment. The sun has fallen from the heavens, the moon is darkened, all the stars are out; the only light streams from the Cross; and in that strange and ruddy glow how differently things look from what they used to do in mere deceptive sunshine. Before you make your choice of a life, be certain you have seen things in the light of the Cross. For see how some that seemed so huge have shrunk to nothingness, and some you had thought insignificant have grown how vast! How this light changes everything! And it will be the only light upon the Day of Judgment![1]

What, my soul, was thy errand here?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year?
'Nay, none of these!'[2]

3. Further, if by the grace of God we have come upon our day-dreams in Christ, then it is

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Hero in Thy Soul*, 47.
[2] Whittier, *My Soul and I*.

vital that we find some power that will enable us to work them out. For of ourselves we cannot. These hearts of ours are so frail and so stumbling; the quest is so long and so hard; there are so many things to drag us down; in our own soul there is a discord and a tumult. We know what we should be and do, but it will not work out. And mere ideals are cold comfort, are apt to leave in us only a soreness and an ache of baffled disappointment, like Peer Gynt, hesitating, compromising, baffled, futile:

> Ay, think of it—wish it done, will it to boot,
> But do it—no! that's past my understanding.

If all that Christ can do for us is to show how glorious a thing a human life can be, while leaving us ourselves unchanged, His gift to us is like to be, not peace, but the long stinging of an unhealed wound of passionate regret and futile yearning. But Christ gives us, not an ideal only, but the power to work it out.

How does it work, this wonderful thing? There is no mystery about that. Every man (is it not so?) does what he likes: not necessarily what his self-interest advises, or even what he ought, but what he likes. To change him you must change his likings, must somehow introduce into his life something that he prefers to the old foolish loves that were dragging him down. And thus our problem is to get our likings won for the deep central things. Duty may be cold, abstract, official. But change it to a personal affection, and we shall choose it every time. A mother can do impossible things when her little one is ill. For then duty is not merely duty, it is love. And love can do anything. Well, that is the secret of Christianity.

The Fruit of Adversity

Phil. i. 12.—'Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel' (R.V.).

In this passage we have an illustration of the superiority of the spirit in man when he is on happy terms with his true source in God. It is a man in prison who writes these happy words, in which there is no anger, no bitterness, but the most beautiful reconciliation.

It is a thing which we cannot ponder too closely, that all the hopeful, happy, triumphant things that have ever been said about life have been said by suffering souls. It has never been from those who had to fight for their life or for their faith that the hard things, the bitter things, have been said concerning life. All the moral light by which we live has been the legacy of hard-pressed and contending souls. There have been no cynics among the poor. There has been no contempt for life among the poor. And these things bear witness to the true nature of our soul, and to the terms on which, by God's appointment, a man shall find and retain his highest life. A man is never so strong, so pure, so superior to circumstance as when some shadow—be it cast by evil fortune or bodily fear or by a thrust of moral uneasiness—closes him in with Jesus Christ, knowing that there in the presence of Christ or nowhere he must find his new motive for life. We know that it is just such things as Paul was enduring at this time—the loss of friends, the reproaches of enemies, the sense of failure and defeat, as men of the world might suppose—that quicken and fortify all truly faithful souls.

We know from evidence elsewhere that St Paul had a love for the Philippians above the love which he had for any of his other churches: it was from the Philippian Church alone that he consented to receive money for his support. Now, it is an evidence of true love that it wishes to spare the loved ones any wound; and so the Apostle is assuring himself and is trying to assure them that the things that have happened to him have not been bad things but good things, for they have done him good, and they have done good to others; and he is sure that the longer he lives, the more he will thank God for those very things which they and he might have deplored. 'The things which happened unto me,' he says, 'have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel,' and that in three ways.

1. In the first place, 'My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prætorian guard, and to all the rest' (v. 13). St Paul was sure that there in that rough camp he was, by his patience as well as by his words, recommending the gospel which he preached. He was sure that here and there one among them would pause and wonder as to what might be the source of his peace. There were Stoics in those

days—men of a rigorous and austere morality, who knew how to stand unmoved in their days of disaster; but they never were joyful, they never were thankful for such days; they were only resigned. The best of them were sad. But what would arrest the minds of those soldiers, what, St Paul tells us, did arrest them, was that he was lying in bonds, not for a crime, and not for sedition, but for the sake of some loyalty and honour towards God which they could admire, even though they could not comprehend it. A proof that Christ had come, was—that St Paul was there. And, therefore, he could say: 'My bonds are manifest in Christ.'

We cannot all perform, but we may all endure. Here is a service of Christ wherein all may enrol. We may endure hardness as His good soldiers. We may give God's providences their sweetest names. We may be patient when things are contrary, and modest when things are prospering with us. We may strive to preserve at all times the manner and bearing of those whom it cost much to redeem. We may not be able to do great things for Christ, and yet we may be great in the way we obey and endure.

¶ When F. W. Robertson was ordained by the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop gave him as his motto the text from which the ordination sermon had been preached, which was, 'Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.' It was prophetic. Hardness was to come to him in various forms, and the spirit of endurance would be called forth after no common fashion.

Physical suffering was his; with intellectual doubts he had to wrestle as in a conflict of life and death, until he emerged from the darkness into the clear shining of the light. He knew the meaning of Emerson's dictum: 'To be great is to be misunderstood.' And from such misunderstanding there arose suspicion and attack and persecution, of which those who were guilty ought in very truth to have been heartily ashamed.

His biographer tells us that on the manuscript of one of his discourses—on 'The Thorn in the Flesh'—he saw the mark of a tear. It had fallen as he wrote alone in his room. Oh, the pathos and the eloquence of that! But he bore his suffering in the spirit of his Master, until he was actually able to say: 'Pain has long ceased to be an unintelligible mystery to me. Agony and anguish—oh, in these, far more than in sunshine, I can read a meaning and believe in infinite Love.'[1]

2. In another way, as the Apostle sees, the things which had happened to him had fallen out unto the progress of the gospel. We read: 'Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.' Faith is contagious. One helps another in the things of the spirit. Courage begets courage. Many a battle has been won because at the critical moment a leader appeared or some one raised a cheer. It would seem that there were Christians in Rome who were losing heart, but the faithfulness of Paul was like the sound of a trumpet in their souls. We who stand committed to Christ are under a spiritual obligation to maintain a clear and decisive loyalty—not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of those whom our steadfastness will strengthen, and whom our faultiness might confuse or discourage.

3. There was one thing more which led the Apostle to say that the things which had befallen him had fallen out unto the furtherance of the gospel. We have it in verse 19. 'I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope.' In other words—for this is the heart of that saying—the great Apostle also confessed that harsh and baffling things may have their place in taking us further into the love of God.

¶ When Principal Rainy was a boy, his father told him, giving him a first lesson in life, that there had been certain things in his experience so sore that they seemed simply 'intolerable,' and yet, looking back, he saw that of all that had befallen him these were what he could not possibly have done without.

It sometimes happens that we who know ourselves, and who do not wish to deceive ourselves, can say quite confidently why a certain thing had to befall us which did befall us. It was the last stroke of the eagle stirring her nest and driving out her young, not in a senseless cruelty but only in order that her young may learn that they have wings. Just so things

[1] J. Flew, *Saints of Yesterday*, 195.

happen to ourselves which simply compel us to put our trust in God to a depth which otherwise we should never have attempted. Things, on the other hand, befall us at times about which, with all our desire to see the Hand of God, we cannot see the meaning or the value. But why should we be in any ultimate doubt concerning these things? We have still a long journey to go. We are poor judges of what we shall come to need. Why should we not believe that He who knows what is before us is putting us in readiness for it? Most of us can say in regard to the contrary and interrupting things that *have* befallen us, 'It was good for me that I was afflicted.' It is not a great venture of faith, surely, to believe that in regard to things in our experience, which may be baffling and dark to-day, 'we shall yet praise thee, O Lord.'

The Evangel of Experience

Phil. i. 12.—'Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel' (R.V.).

Paul was one of those rare men who make light of their misfortunes. He sums up his difficulties in a single phrase—'the things which happened unto me'—and one of these happenings was that he was now in prison. But he had learned the difficult art of turning awkward circumstances to the best account, and thus it is that we find the good news of Christ travelling throughout the whole prætorian guard.

The materialist thinks of the restricted liberty, of the galling chain; he forgets that he still has a free mind, a liberated spirit, an imagination on which no hand can be laid. What was prison to John Bunyan? The jail at Bedford became the birthplace of a Dream which will last as long as time. Where was Ezekiel when 'the heavens were opened' and he saw 'visions of God'? He was among the captives by the river Chebar. That is not captivity. No man is a captive who sees visions of God. He is the real prisoner who has the carnal mind, who is cursed with dark, self-centred thoughts.

1. Paul tells the story of his life to the soldier who guards him; the guard is relieved, and he tells the next; the men tell their comrades, and at length the Apostle can write: 'Thus it has become notorious among all the Imperial guards, and everywhere, that it is for the sake of Christ that I am a prisoner; and the greater part of the brethren, made confident in the Lord through my imprisonment, now speak of God's message without fear, more boldly than ever.' Such is the contagious influence of a man filled with one aim, fired with one enthusiasm, devoted to one service.

A man's own religious experience, working itself out through ordinary events, may thus become an evangelistic medium. The equipment of an evangelist is comprised not so much in a dramatic theology as in a dramatic experience. It is not contained in a set of doctrinal statements or conventional religious phrases, but rather in the things that have happened to him. The spirit of Jesus Christ works its way in the individual, and outward to the universal. For no man lives to himself or dies to himself. A man may perhaps never speak to another of Jesus Christ, and yet he may win that man for Christ. Character has more force than eloquence.

¶ After the death of the saintly M'Cheyne, a letter addressed to him was found in his locked desk, a letter he had shown to no one while he lived. It was from one who wrote to tell him that he had been the means of leading him to Christ, and in it were these words, 'It was nothing that you *said* that first made me wish to be a Christian, it was the beauty of holiness which I saw in your very face.'[1]

The things that happen to us make up our experience. A man's biography is the record of the things that happen *to* him and *in* him. Things begin to happen to us as soon as we make our appearance on the stage of life; so that if experience be an evangelizing agency there need be no delay in the furtherance of truth. How does this happening process work out? Things often fall out to the progress of the gospel unconsciously. We use the word gospel in its largest significance, meaning by it the spirit of love, tenderness, sympathy, long-suffering, sacrifice; it includes everything that softens, deepens, purifies, and elevates the heart of mankind. In that case we can see how the things that happened to us even in our earliest years may have fallen out to the progress of the gospel.

[1] G. H. Knight.

2. Let us consider the idea of the text in regard to three spheres.

(1) *Home life.*—The things that happen there should be on this upward and advancing line. Parents have the progress of the gospel committed to their charge. The things that happen to the child at home are largely in the hands of fathers and mothers. What kind of an atmosphere are we seeking to create at home? What sort of a Sunday have we at home? The Sunday ought to be one of the brightest days of the week. If the inmates of any home look forward with delight to the approach of Sunday, the things which are happening there are at least tinged with the radiance of God's own sunshine.

¶ 'O those sacred Sabbaths!' cries Frances Willard, 'the early mornings when we ran together through the dewy grass or laid our ears to the brown bosom of the earth to hear her vibrant breathing, to thrill at her pulsing heart! O birds that sang for me, and flowers that bloomed, and mother-love that brooded, and father-love that held! And God's sky over all, and Himself near us everywhere; yes, nearer than near.'

¶ The light set in the cottage window, to guide the wanderer's footsteps over the wide moor or through the dark forest, has ever been a favourite theme with poets and artists. And it is a true parable. Every Christian home is a point of light in a dark world. In a little old Italian town I once saw this motto over a house door: '*Ubi Deus ibi pax*'—'Where God is there is peace.' A home where Christ is head of the house is a place of peace, a place of beauty, a place of fellowship. Every home like that is a beacon light for men to live by; it is a distributing centre of the life of God in a world that is half dead. Who shall measure the influence of a mother with her tender, self-effacing, boundless love, of a father who leads the family in the way of righteousness, of children who go out into the world as well-taught citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, of a family life and a family fellowship which is shot through and through with the very spirit of Jesus Christ![1]

(2) *Education.*—The schoolmaster does not get his due. He is one of the most important factors in life. The schoolmasters of a country ought to be among the finest characters of a country. They should be picked men, Christian in the noblest and completest sense of the term, because they exert influence over young life during its most critical and impressionable period.

¶ A few years ago Sir James Barrie went back to the little town of Dumfries, where he spent his schooldays, and was given what is called a 'burgess ticket,' which is the equivalent of 'the freedom of the city.' In the course of his address, Sir James referred to a certain teacher, John Nielson by name, who had taught him in those days of the long ago. 'I should have been prouder,' he said, 'to have him here than almost any man in Scotland. I have good reason to roll that name, John Nielson, affectionately on the tongue, not necessarily because he was so determined to make us mathematicians, whatever might be his own views on the subject—and I, for one, differed from those views profoundly—but because in our most impressionable years he set us an example of conduct and character that kept a guiding hand on our shoulders when we went out into the world.'

(3) *Companionship.*—How true it is also in the matter of companionship that the things which happen to us may fall out to the progress of the gospel. Our friends determine the quality if not the course of our history more than we can tell. If we be really knit to any true friend, there is an unfathomable element in our redemption. These invisible ties keep us right sometimes when we are absent one from another. And there are men we have never seen who become our friends; poets, novelists, artists, teachers, heroes—these often fall out to the progress of the gospel. They have contributed to the sum of the world's pity, insight, charity, tolerance; they have continued the spirit of the Son of Man. Is it not wonderful and beautiful to think that a sentence from the writings of one who lived, long perhaps before we were born, can kindle light in our minds and shed abroad love and sympathy in our hearts, and so make us friends for ever?

¶ George Eliot tells us in the *Mill on the Floss* how Maggie Tulliver, in all the fever and rebellion of her fretted heart, chanced on an old copy of the *Imitation*, marked now and then with ink grown faded and almost illegible through age; and how, reading here and there

[1] E. S. Woods, *A Faith That Works*, 47.

where the long dead hand pointed her, she was directed by it into truth and peace.[1]

Whatever our experience has been—light or dark—it may in the providence of God fall out to the progress of the gospel. We do but see the surface of things. Life is complex, interrelated, intertwined: no man lives or dies to himself. Some of us who think we are doing but little for God may be high up on the list. It is not for us to judge or to be harsh critics of one another. Let us play well our own part.

The Conquest of Limitation

Phil. i. 12.—'Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel' (R.V.).

Wherever there was a church in need Paul was there to help it; wherever there was an open door Paul was the first to step in. Nothing mattered to him except that the work should go forward, and the greatest part of its burdens he carried on his own shoulders. And now there are to be no more adventures. That part of the story is ended. The days of open doors have gone; all the doors now are barred and bolted. He is a prisoner. The need of distant provinces may cry out for help, but he cannot go in answer. New fields may open up, but he cannot take advantage of the occasion. The old adventurous spirit is in bonds. How will he regard it?

'Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel.' Resignation bows its head and says, 'What must be must be, I accept'; faith lifts up its eyes and says, 'Even here there is beauty and meaning and scope.' That is what we get in St Paul's sentence. It is a verdict of faith. There is no submission about it. There is rather the note of a half-humorous conquest. The Apostle looks at his narrow confinement and says, 'Even this is not without its effect.' His prison turns into a new kind of pulpit. The work goes on.

1. What is the task of faith in this world? Not so much to explain as to overcome! Faith does not set out to give us a clear-cut explanation of the why and wherefore of things; it is the spirit which goes out into the midst of inexplicable things to shape them after its own fashion. Faith is a life, not a scheme. Ultimately in this great business of human life mystery broods over the face of things, explanations are withheld, and the whole issue comes to this, whether we are going to wrest out of life's problems some gain which can never be lost. The man of faith does not know more about the meaning of life's problems than any of his fellows, he is not in possession of the key to the puzzle, but he has within himself the spirit which challenges life to give up its hidden riches.

So the greatest test of faith comes to us when life shows its worst side, and it comes, supremely, in old age, when the whole temptation of life is to feed on memory instead of on hope. The greatest witness of faith is old age which has still the forward look. That your young men should see visions is no wonderful thing; that your old men should dream dreams is. Paul was never greater than in the closing stages of his life when he saw in his prison an opportunity, and his heart leapt out in thankfulness to take it.

But this same issue is always fought out when adversity appears, whether it comes in youth or in age. The difference between men and women is not the measure of adversity which comes to them, but what they do with adversity when it appears. In every life sooner or later 'the rains descend, the winds blow, and the floods arise'; for one man the house of life falls in ruins, for another it stands secure, and the difference lies not in the intensity of the storm, but in the power to withstand.

¶ There is a fine story which is told of Marshal Foch, that one day when the position of things was critical, the further retreat would have endangered the whole line, one of his divisional generals sent him a message saying that he could not continue to hold a certain line of trenches which had become untenable, and in reply the Marshal sent him this message, 'If you can't hold on, you must advance.' It is a great motto for life, and the power to advance in such circumstances is where the great test comes.

2. And now if that is faith's greatest test, it is also by inevitable consequence the field where the greatest triumphs are won. What is the thing that we could least afford to lose out of the story of our lives or the story of the world?

[1] A. J. Gossip.

It is the record of the hard days. The victories which men have won over against circumstances are the greatest stories in the world. One thinks of Milton in his blindness writing words like these :

I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward.

One thinks of Beethoven in his deafness giving music for the ears of future ages. Or one turns to another field of life and thinks of James Watt, the great inventor, feeble in body and starving on a few shillings a week, saying, 'Of all things in life there is nothing more foolish than inventing.' Nearer still in time there is David Livingstone dragging a fever-stricken body over the wastes of Africa for a dream he had set out to attain. And you notice there are prisons in all these illustrations—the dark prison of blindness, the stony prison of deafness, the prisons of sickness and infirmity, but out of these have come the furtherance of poetry and music and invention and discovery.

These greater records in the story of faith have their own message to ourselves. In the end the greatness of life for all of us depends upon how we deal with that little phrase, 'the things which happened unto me.' Are we to be victims of what happens, whether it be good or ill? Then we are among the defeated. Circumstances paint their image on our little lives, and the world has no gain from our living. Or are we conquerors, moulding conditions to our will? Then the world does gain.

¶ There was a day when Bramwell Booth went to his father, the general, to explain to him that the physicians could do nothing more about his eyes. Bramwell broke the news as gently as he could. The old general said, 'You mean that I am blind?' 'I fear that we must contemplate that,' said Bramwell. 'I shall never see your face again?' asked the general. 'No, probably not in this world,' said Bramwell. The general's hand moved slowly across the counterpane until it grasped his son's. Then he said, 'God must know best! Bramwell, I have done what I could for God and for the people with my eyes. Now I shall do what I can do for God and for the people without my eyes.' [1]

[1] H. E. Fosdick.

Faith is not an explanation of things, but a spirit of life. It is not a key to the puzzle, but a great venture. There are some people who trouble themselves at the outset of life because they have not a complete creed. They want a spiritual ordnance map of the country into which they are going, and they are unhappy if some of the roads are not clearly marked. That is a wrong method of approach. Creeds are a goal, not a starting-point. Put the few essential beliefs you have into great practice and you will find them growing year by year. That is God's method of teaching, and it is all summed up in the old word, 'He that doeth the will shall know the doctrine.'

The Master's call is 'Follow me,' and as we follow we begin to learn. Every day's life in His service adds something to our creed. Our views, as we call them, spring out of the things we have actually seen in our journeyings. Our beliefs rise from the things we have lived by. And so, slowly but very surely, we come to our own assurance.

The Spiritual Christ

Phil. i. 19.—'The Spirit of Jesus Christ.'

THE Ascension of our Lord, however we may interpret it in detail, was the solemn termination of His earthly ministry. It marked His final exit from the world of sense, the formal close of His visible intercourse with men. Never again would Christ be known 'in the body of his flesh.' The Jesus of history vanishes from sight. He had lived and suffered and died and been victorious over death; and now, having finished all His earthly work, He passes, amid circumstances impressively symbolic, to the eternal world, to be enthroned through all the ages at the right hand of God.

And yet, if from one point of view the Ascension marks an end, it may be regarded no less truly as a fresh beginning. For there is no real end, no possible conclusion, to the life and work of Christ. The gospel is emphatically a gospel of beginnings. The whole history of Christianity is a history of beginnings. There is always something more in store, something larger and higher—new horizons and prospects and opportunities and blessings. And so, if the Ascension is an end, it is also the preparation of a fresh beginning. When the historical

Jesus departed, it was only in order that He might come to men anew in an inward, universal, and abiding form. As Bishop Westcott writes: 'By the Ascension Christ in His humanity is brought close to every one of us, and the words "in Christ," the very charter of our faith, gain a present power.'

Our subject, then, is The Spiritual Christ. What, let us ask, is the Spiritual Christ to us? And what is—or what should be—our relation to Him?

1. In the first place, the Spiritual Christ is essentially Christ still present with us. In these days of historical study and historical criticism we tend too much to think of our Lord as belonging to the past. We picture Him realistically. We revive the scenes and customs of His Palestine environment. We consider His teaching in its original associations. With the help of the vast resources of modern scholarship and learning, we seek to get to know Christ as He once was long ago. It is all very interesting and valuable and educative. And yet we may well beware lest, by dwelling so particularly on the Jesus of the past, we unwittingly dull our perception of the Jesus of the present. For, after all, the very pith and point of our religion lies in this—that the Master is not gone. That gracious fellowship He vouchsafed to men most certainly did not cease when He went up to God. The Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit which dwelt and still dwells without measure in Jesus, the Spirit which entered and which enters still into all that He was and is, His very own Spirit, is sent by Jesus to us. And because the Spirit, the Breath inseparable from the life of Christ, is here, therefore Christ, whose the Spirit is, is present here Himself.

'The Christian religion,' writes one of our theologians, 'depends not on what Christ was merely, but on what He is; not simply on what He did, but on what He does.' And it is this unswerving belief in Christ's presence and activity that uniquely characterizes all the saints of all the centuries. 'To me,' cries St Paul—and he speaks for all the apostles—'to me life is Christ.' Or passing by such witnesses as St Augustine and St Bernard, as St Teresa and À Kempis, we may come to modern times and modern testimonies. We find a man like Phillips Brooks writing in this wise to his friend: 'All experience comes to be but more and more of pressure of Christ's life on ours. . . . I cannot tell you how personal this grows to me. He is here. He knows me, and I know Him. It is no figure of speech. It is the realest thing in the world.' Or again, we read the words, so carefully weighed and chosen, of Forbes Robinson of Cambridge. 'When I get quite quiet, and my mind is sane, and my conscience at rest, when I almost stop thinking and listen, I am quite sure that a Personal Being comes to me, and as He comes, brings some of His own life to flow into my life.' Such persons, it is wellnigh impossible for us to doubt, had somehow a first-hand knowledge of a present Christ.

But there is a further point. The Spiritual Christ is not only Christ present with us; He is Christ present within us. He comes, not merely to, but into, us, as the Indweller of our souls. He comes to make His spirit ours, His mind ours, all the energies and riches of His being ours, until, in the Apostle's phrase, the very Christ be 'formed' in us, until He become, as it were, reincarnate in us, while we grow up into the fullness of His stature.

¶ A great religious writer of the eighteenth century has expressed this very beautifully. 'This holy Jesus,' he says, 'that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new life of thy soul, that is to raise thee out of the darkness of death into the light of life, and give thee power to become a son of God, is already within thee, living, stirring, calling, knocking at the door of thy heart, and wanting nothing but thine own faith and goodwill, to have as real a birth and form in thee as He had in the Virgin Mary.'

We recall how Robert Browning has described the fusing together of two human personalities:

> At first, 'twas something our two souls
> Should mix as mists do; each is sucked
> In each now: on the new stream rolls
> Whatever rocks obstruct.

Even thus we may say (though all analogies are inadequate) is the blending of Christ's Spirit with the spirit of the Christian.

> Draw if thou canst the mystic line
> Severing rightly His from thine—
> Which is human, which Divine.

2. What, then, should be our relation, what our attitude, towards the Spiritual Christ? We may point out two plain and practical duties.

(1) We should *train ourselves to recognize the Spiritual Christ*—to distinguish fact from fancy, the real Christ who veritably lives and works in us from the unreal Christ created by our own subjective moods and fond imaginings. We should learn first of all to be certain of Jesus. And how may this be done? Well, a similar difficulty once occurred to St Teresa in respect of her voices and visions, and she thought out a solution. 'That which purports to come from God,' she said, 'is to be received only in so far as it corresponds with the sacred writings.' And Teresa's test must be ours. The single means of verifying our own visions and experiences is the continual, careful study of the Figure in the Gospels. It is simply impossible that we can ever come to recognize the Spiritual Christ unless we are familiar with the lineaments of the Historical Christ. As Martin Luther puts it in his vigorous style: 'The man who lets go of Christ's life and work, and desires now to seek Him in some private way, betrays Him afresh. He must seek Him as He was and walked on earth; then shall he find life.' 'Back to the Gospels' must be the watchword of all ages. For these are the fountains of the heavenly knowledge, the deep, clear wells in which we may see reflected the faithful image of the Saviour.

¶ There is a noble passage in Erasmus' Preface to his Greek Testament where he speaks of how the Gospels contain the lineaments of Christ: 'Other writings are of such a character as to make many regret deeply the trouble that they have spent upon them. . . . But happy is he whom death finds meditating upon these. May we all thirst for them with all our hearts, embrace them, dwell constantly in them, cherish them, and lay down our lives upon them. May we be transformed into them, as study passes into character. . . . These writings represent the living Image of that sacred Mind, and set before you Christ Himself speaking, healing, dying, rising again, in such complete reality, that you would not so truly see Him if you were to behold Him with your eyes.'

(2) When once we have learned to recognize the Spiritual Christ, we must *make our response to Him*; we must allow Him so to inform, so to dominate and control us, that our life may be positively a development of His life, and our actions a real 'continuation' of His history. Our aim, in other words, is thoroughly to assimilate, to appropriate as our very own, the Spirit of Jesus. Such an appropriation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is something much more than following in an external way our Lord's example. We cannot, indeed, but admire those devoted disciples, from St Francis down to Tolstoi, who have striven with magnificent heroism to imitate the Master. *Vitam Jesu Christi stude imitari* is an inspiring challenge. Yet we are none the less convinced that a literal reproduction of Christ's outward life and action is not what He desired.

¶ Dr Robert F. Horton gives an account in one of his books[1] of a visit to Rome. There he saw many wonderful sights, and here was one of them. In the sculpture gallery of the Capitol at Rome there is a collection of busts complete, or nearly complete, of all the Roman Emperors from the earliest to the latest. The busts are for the most part the work of contemporary artists. It is a fine study to trace the decay of the Art from the noble Greek marbles of the early Cæsars, through the gracious decline in the silver age of the Antonines, to the relapse into barbarism in the days of the Gothic Emperors. The singular reflection occurs, that the sculptor who chiselled this latest effigy, a work little better than the crude wooden doll of a child, a caricature of a human head, had before him, there in Rome, those consummate examples from the great period. The heir of all the Ages—he produced this! In the presence of masterpieces this was his handiwork. The explanation of such a decline and a degradation is found when we observe the conditions of true productiveness in Art. Lifeless imitation is decay. The copy of the best models passes by insensible gradations into the production of the worst.

Christ seeks in us for originals, not for mechanical imitations. He asks us to repeat, not the manner of His life but the principle of it, not the details but the type, not the form of it but its essence. He never demands that we should copy His past; but He ever requires that we should 'christen' our present, by appropriating and exhibiting in the twentieth century the Spirit — the self-same Spirit of love and grace and holiness—that He possessed and manifested with such perfection in the first.

[1] *The Word of God*, 15.

Glorifying Christ

Phil. i. 20, 21.—'As always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'

To be properly understood, these verses must be taken in connection with one another and interpreted in the light of the whole passage in which they occur. St Paul is not instituting a contrast between life and death. His central thought is that Christ is to be glorified whether by life *or* by death, and it is a thought which stretches right across the gulf that separates between life and death. There is no death for those whose life is Christ; there is only *life*, here and now, and fuller life hereafter; gain, not loss; development, not catastrophe; victory, not defeat. There is no morbid longing for death in this passage. Death might, in certain moods and circumstances, have an attractiveness for Paul, as an escape from almost intolerable misery, but it could be gain in the full sense only if it followed upon doing the will of God. That this will should be done, that Christ should be magnified, is the dominating idea.

1. Much harm has been done to Christian thought and life by the tendency to isolate and emphasize the last words of the text, 'to die is gain.' And when they are once separated from the words 'to live is Christ,' they are easily associated with the verse which occurs later in the passage, 'having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.' Thus the wrong impression of these words of intrinsic beauty goes deep. It leads to that 'other-worldliness' which has often been associated with Christianity, to the setting up of an unhealthy ideal of impossible detachment. It fosters a contempt for the value of this life as compared with the next. Its perfectly healthy and harmless joys are despised or frowned upon. The privileges of friendship and the inspirations of fellowship are neglected. The necessity for courtesy and good manners—which are the outward signs of a properly sympathetic interest in other people—is overlooked, and the duty of social service is sacrificed to the pursuit of a purely individual salvation. Our present existence is represented as a dreary wilderness journey through which we take our lonely and painful way. We have to *pass through* it—that is all—and the sooner we are done with it the better.

This is an unfortunate attitude to life, and there is no justification for it in the text. It is akin to the idea of salvation which is to be found in much of the religious literature, for example, of India—a view according to which salvation is simply deliverance or escape or running away from the cares and anxieties of human existence instead of an emphasis upon growing healthiness or completeness of life both in the present and in the future.

¶ There is an Indian saint who writes:—

The longer here we linger
'Tis only grief we gain.
There is a heavenly City,
Where we shall have no pain—
When will it be?

Here all is false and fleeting
This land of vanity.
There is a land of vision
Where grace our lot shall be—
Oh! for that day![1]

¶ Sir W. Robertson Nicoll writes of Bishop Walsham How: 'There is something very admonishing in the manner in which the old man faced death. He saw it coming long before, but said little. He made all the preparations he could, wrote the fullest and clearest directions to his children on every matter, and even such small things as instructions to his successor with respect to ventilators and other details. He continued in excellent spirits, enjoying everything, and went on preaching. He arranged a fishing holiday in Ireland, and had some good sport. He was glad in the scenes of the beautiful world he was soon to leave. He had none of the morbid feeling that these things were shadows soon to pass. There was nothing of the craving:—

O Paradise! O Paradise! who would not long
for rest?

He was in the strait, no doubt, which St Paul of old was in. He was willing to depart and be with Christ, which is very far better, and yet willing to remain in the flesh as long as that was expedient for any. Again, we ask, is not

[1] Tāyumānavar.

this in the full sense Christian, the thankful acceptance of all the blessings of earth ? '

We must on no account lose sight of St Paul's fundamental thought, which he expresses in the text taken as a whole. Even in the worst of worldly circumstances death could be really attractive only if it were in accordance with the will of God. Even if death might bring added happiness, men must not dwell on that happiness apart from considerations of the will of God. St Paul himself had a desire to escape from the misery and hardship which seemed to be all he had to look for, and he frankly confesses this desire—'having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.' But he puts the thought away from him, or rather he puts it under the control of the far larger and nobler thought that Christ must be magnified whether by life *or* by death. Similarly, even if it consoled his hearers to think of the uninterrupted and blissful communion with Christ which lay beyond the grave, they must not allow this thought to be uppermost in their minds. If they did so, they would miss the happiness they expected. No longing for death was permissible if it was the will of God that they should live. Even at the sacrifice of immediate personal bliss Christ must be magnified whether by life or by death.

Now we can never know that death is the will of God for us until it comes ; therefore we must not dwell on the thought of it. In mystical moods of rapt religious devotion, or after a life of long-continued and physically hopeless suffering, death may become attractive—so attractive as to arouse a longing for it. But its actual coming is outside of our control. We have nothing to do with it ; it comes by the will of God or it comes not at all. It is for us, therefore, to concentrate our thoughts on *life*. Life, not death, is the will of God for us, so long as we are alive. We are called to live in the fullest possible way for the glory of God and of Christ, watching for every opportunity for the service of our fellows and the hastening of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

¶ 'To-day,' said Principal Rainy, 'I have a committee, to-morrow I preach, one day I shall have to die. Well, we must try to do each duty as it comes as well as we can.'

2. St Paul is ready for either death or life. He is not afraid of death, but he refuses to concentrate his thoughts on death or view it in the light of an escape to private happiness. His attention is turned to the opportunities and duties of this present life, and, if it is more needful for others that he should remain in life, if his abiding would be for the furtherance of their faith, he is willing, perfectly willing, to remain. To him to live is Christ, and to die would be gain *only* if he were first of all willing to live in the spirit of Christ. To say that death is gain does not mean that death is put in contrast with and preferred to the best human life which we may now live according to the will of God. The comparison is not between the living which is Christ, and the death which is gain. Rather the verse, when taken in connection with the context, means that the 'gainful' death is to be regarded as a continuation, supplement, or completion of this present life in Christ, as a consequence which can emerge only if we are willing to live this best of all lives here and now. We shall never grasp this gain which lies in death if we are turning away from the present in order to lose ourselves in contemplation of the mystical joy which lies beyond, if we are unwilling to live strenuously, completely, joyously, and unselfishly now and so long as God shall continue our span of mortal life. The Christian is called by the voice of Christ and all His true followers to a meditation upon life and not upon death, to a constant endeavour to learn more fully the secret of life, and to draw more constantly and hopefully from the eternal sources of spiritual power.

3. The thought of the text leaves us with a message both of warning and of comfort. Those who are most vividly conscious of the deceitfulness of the human heart may say that, if we concentrate our attention wholly upon life and put death in the background of our minds, we may be tempted to take very short views and allow ourselves to be controlled by the motive of present gain. If we put death too much out of sight, it may find us unprepared and come upon us as an overwhelming catastrophe. But this will not happen if we keep in mind the fundamental principle, 'to me to live is Christ.' Under the guidance of this we are called, not to a materialistic life spent in pleasure, or in the creating of wealth and reputation for ourselves ; nor even to a merely social life de-

pendent for its interest on our immediate circle of friends and associates, but rather to a life on the highest possible levels, controlled by the will of God and inspired by the fellowship of Christ who has shown us the way to the Father. Thus abiding in the Eternal, we cannot be unprepared for the changes of time. The horizons of our lives stretch away beyond the limits of our mortal lives and we see the end from the beginning.

From the text, also, we may draw comfort in our moods of personal depression and in the lonely hours of bereavement. The life which is lived in Christ holds no fear for us or for those whom we love, even when the shadows lie deepest on our mortal lives. For the Christ in whom we live brought life and immortality to light, and for us death can be no abrupt change, no catastrophe. Through the gates of death we shall pass with gladness to that heavenly life which is at present veiled from our mortal eyes, but is hid with Christ in God. If to us to live is Christ, to die will indeed be gain. But the gain can come to us only if we realize that our present duty, our all-absorbing duty, is to *live*—live in Christ.

¶ For this man the Alps were tunnelled. There was no interruption in his progress. He would go, he believed, without 'break of gauge,' and would pass through the darkness, scarcely knowing when it came, and certainly unchecked for even a moment, right on to the other side where he would come out, as travellers to Italy do, to fairer plains and bluer skies, to richer harvests and a warmer sun. No jolt, no pause, no momentary suspension of consciousness, no reversal, nor even interruption in his activity, did Paul expect death to bring him, but only continuance and increase of all that was essential to his life.[1]

What Christianity Changes

Phil. i. 21.—'To me to live is Christ.'

1. What was it that came into St Paul's life when he became a Christian? He had always been an ardent missionary. He had always been a man of quick wit and of keen intelligence. He had always been not only a good man but a man of keen moral enthusiasm. He learned theology, not at the foot of the Cross, but at the feet of Gamaliel. He did not wake up to find that 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness' when, in the heat of indignation, he dashed off his letter to the Galatians, or sat down in a moment of calmer reflection to work out the Epistle to the Romans. The man of faith had always passionately believed in the promises which had been given to his fathers when Israel became a nation, and in the chequered history of his race he had detected the finger of God.

There is a sense in which St Paul never changed his creed. A God who should judge the world in righteousness, a Saviour who would visit and redeem His people, a Messiah who would come in the clouds of heaven with the holy angels, represented his convictions, not only when he proclaimed the gospel in Europe, but when he harried the Church in Jerusalem. He whose missionary journeys are a Christian Odyssey, who tells us that he had thrice suffered shipwreck, that in his perilous travels he had encountered swollen rivers and robber bands, had endured hunger and thirst, exposure and fatigue, had laboured like John Wesley and suffered like George Fox—nay, more, had already almost anticipated his own martyr's death—this indomitable adventurer would have cheerfully encountered the same hardships and courted similar dangers for the religion of his fathers.

And St Paul did not become a theologian when he became a Christian. He did not receive a system of religious thought, as Moses received the tables of stone, when his career was suddenly diverted into the channels which he had been doing his utmost to stop. When the power of thought returned to him he had to go on thinking, as we all do, upon the lines of our education. He makes this perfectly clear when he tells Agrippa that he now stands to be judged 'for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.' We are so apt to confuse conversion with a change in religious opinion, which means the substitution of one theology for another, that we do well to remind ourselves of the essentially Jewish habit of St Paul's mind. Our difficulty in understanding him lies precisely in this very point. We all know how difficult it is to express, first in clear thought and then in appropriate phrase, our most vivid perceptions. The fine edge of the experience is blunted when it is reproduced in

[1] Alexander Maclaren.

thought, or the words glance off into conventional modes of expression, the insufficiency of which we dimly feel even when we make use of them. The wonder rather is that the living truth should penetrate our forms of speech, not that what seems luminous to one man, one age, one nation should be unreal and meaningless to another.

When, therefore, we find St Paul embarking on an argument about justification, or even using what to us are the more familiar terms of salvation and redemption, we should never allow ourselves to forget that this is to him a natural way of representing the fundamental need of his personal life. If his conversion did not change Saul of Tarsus into a man of action, it did not transform him into a religious philosopher. We must try to understand the ways in which he expresses his thought, but we must not mistake those for his message. It was not a new theology that was disclosed to him on the road to Damascus.

Nor was there ever a time when St Paul would not have been generally recognized as a good man. A quick conscience is one of his most obvious characteristics. The very thought that injustice could be attributed to God was oppressive to him. He could not endure that any man should do evil in order that good might come. He could speak of virtue with the appreciation of a Greek philosopher. As a Pharisee he had a blameless reputation, and we can think of him as of the young ruler whom Jesus loved, with this added, that he probably would have been ready to give all his goods to feed the poor. St Paul's great passion for righteousness preceded the experience upon which his life as a Christian was founded.

2. What, then, was that experience? Let the Apostle answer for himself. 'Have I not seen the Lord?' is the triumphant question which he asks in Corinthians 1. St Paul became aware of Jesus of Nazareth, of whose identity—whether he had seen Him in the days of His flesh or not—he had no shadow of doubt. He became aware of Him still living in all the fullness of His personality, and revealing His presence in the plenitude of celestial power. The Man whose execution at the hands of the Romans had been the seal of ignominious failure, and to acknowledge whom was to wound in its most vital part every preconceived theory of the promised destinies of the Hebrews, laid hold of him with that irresistible grip which every man, as he experiences it, recognizes as the power of God.

That is what St Paul means when he describes what happened as the revelation of God's Son in him. He does not mean that he became the subject of some inward transformation of attitude towards the Crucified. Humanly speaking, nothing was more impossible. The very virility of his intelligence had closed his mind to the force of human testimony and the subtler processes of reason, which at times wear down the most obstinate conclusion. Never was he more profoundly convinced of the imposture, the scandalous caricature of a Messiah, which had been afforded by the dead Nazarene, than in that high noontide when, at the head of his constabulary, he drew near Damascus gate. His sudden arrest he knew for a miracle of Divine grace, because it was a surrender to a superior force. In that moment he recognized the Divine Man whom he had believed to be a dead impostor. He knew Him by sight, he heard His voice and His words, but the revelation was within him, because the experience was one of those in which days and moments lose their significance, and men feel themselves in the grasp of eternity. They have neither beginning nor ending. God encompasses us. The Eternal has searched us out.

3. Now that which came to St Paul as a great reversal of all his former aims and purposes would not have differed in its essential conditions or in its material consequences if he had lived in another century or belonged to another nation. Whatever his hopes, his convictions, his outlook might have been, Jesus Christ must henceforth have dominated them. When once He has been revealed to our spirit as inseparable from the source out of which our life rose, and the ocean whither it flows, Jesus becomes our Alpha and our Omega, 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' When a man sees Jesus he gazes into the depths of reality. There is no room for atheism. He does not think of his prejudices, his philosophy, his ambition, his theological position. His very sins are forgotten. His whole horizon is occupied by a mighty personality, with whose presence he is filled. And the language of the great Apostle, which needs no translation to reach the intelli-

gence and express the experience of every living Christian, gathers up reason, emotion, and will in one glad burst of thankful praise—'To me to live is Christ.'

¶ I do love Christ; He is simply, solely everything. You know, people speak about a religious life, and they mean going to church and prayer meetings. That is not it, surely, I feel it, and believe it. Christ everywhere, in all things. Means are good, but they are only bulrushes. It must be Christ all round, Alpha and Omega, end, between, and beginning.[1]

¶ Zinzendorf declared, 'I have but one enthusiasm; it is He, only He.'

If our experience cannot be equal to that of the Apostle Paul, if conviction must come to us in other and less extraordinary channels, nevertheless there is no other language than that which he employs to express a real and vital Christianity. Trials come to test our faith, and it is then that we know whether our spirits are resting upon eternity, whether our life is now with Christ in God. When Paul saw Jesus of Nazareth, not as He was when He walked this earth, but as He now is, scarred but radiant with final victory, he knew that he had already risen far above the changes and chances of this mortal life to the Judgment Seat of God. God was in Christ and Paul was in Christ, and nought but his own disloyalty to the heavenly vision could break that strong companionship. Even death had no power over it. To the man who can say that in Christ he is a new creature, to die is gain. Limitations are done with; there is the discovery of new faculties and powers, a wider and deeper experience of God. If it is Christ to live, to die is—more Christ. Such a man stands, like the Apostle, willing to wait on or ready to go.

Like the bird who, pausing in her flight
Awhile on boughs too slight,
Feels them give way beneath her, and yet sings,
Knowing that she hath wings.[2]

The All-Sufficient Motive

Phil. i. 21.—'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'

1. George Eliot declares that what makes life dreary is want of motive, and it is true that without motive life is insipid and wearisome. The great Apostle leaves us in no doubt as to what was the aim and purpose of his life. To *me*, he says, to live is Christ. Long ago he had deliberately forsaken the life to which his birth had destined him, and given himself wholly to one work, to one service—to exalt and glorify Jesus Christ, to spread His truth, and push forward His Kingdom. For *that* he had cheerfully sacrificed every other ambition—the getting of wealth, the acquisition of honours, the joys of family life and friendships. That had been the great business of his life, indeed the sole business. There had been no divided purpose, no scattering of energies on many lines. He had concentrated mind, heart, and strength on that one line. For him, therefore, the words were strictly true. Sincerity was one of his first characteristics as a man. When one of the Churches over which he had oversight once questioned his sincerity, he said that he would ask them only to look at his body. 'I bear branded on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' And he did. Roman rods and Jewish thongs had cut deeply into the flesh; cold and privations and hungers and thirsts had branded him. This expression of his faith is not the exuberance of youth, but the summing up of a mature and varied experience. Nor was it lightly uttered, for these words were written in prison.

In the prison he argued something like this. 'For to me, as I see it, to live means Christ, and dying is even better: for to die means gain of Christ. But if, through living on, my labour will bear fruit, why, I cannot tell which to choose. I am caught between the two: for I long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, yet your needs, people of Philippi, make it necessary for me to stay!'

Contrast that with the well-known words in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*! Here is the soliloquy, the arguing with himself, of Hamlet:

To be or not to be?

It is just Paul's question—to live or to die.

To be, or not to be. . . .
. . . . To die: to sleep;
No more; and, by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd.

[1] James Chalmers, *Autobiography and Letters*, 285.
[2] Victor Hugo.

And then he pauses. It would be splendid to die, he says, unless the sleep of death brings evil dreams.

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.

Here was Hamlet in a strait betwixt two, not knowing which to fear more, the afflictions of life or the possible terrors of death. But here was Paul in a strait betwixt two, not knowing which to love more: though he was branded from head to foot with the marks of martyrdom, not knowing which to love more, this life of martyrdom or the death of martyrdom which he was about to die. 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain of Christ.'

This is the central confession of faith of a man who has left a great mark on the world.

2. Have we grasped the real meaning and highest purpose of life? What are the things which we think best worth doing, having, and being? For me to live is—what? There are people everywhere, young and old, who would hardly dare to answer that question to themselves, much less to others, if they answered it truthfully. To some 'life' is money. Money absorbs all its interests and activities; money is its centre and circumference. To some 'life' is fame. Apart from popularity life is devitalised; the loss of reputation is the beginning of death. To many others 'life' is pleasure. The popular philosophy of life is summed up in the word 'happiness'—the greatest amount of happiness for oneself and perhaps for others. We have come back, in these advanced times, to the very thing which the Greek Epicureans were announcing in St Paul's time, and which that Apostle pitilessly condemned. 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' People talk that philosophy in other words when they do not know it. It has come to be accepted that a man's main business, and indeed his only business, is to enjoy life; to get as much out of it as possible in the way of pleasure, excitement, exercise of power, recreation, and material good. Yet, if the Bible is true, that view of life is a debasing and demoralising one. It robs life of all its dignity, and manhood of its chief excellence, and in the end it would be fatal to all the virtues. Life is to be enjoyed, but we are not to live for enjoyment.

¶ Among the ruins of ancient Carthage there is a stone on which some Roman soldier had carved his philosophy. It was this: 'To laugh, to hunt, to bathe, to game—that is life.' What he felt and thought no doubt expressed the sentiments and ambitions of thousands of his class in those days. It was a poor ideal of life; and yet are there not multitudes among us to-day who are moved by no higher aspirations? Pleasure, amusements, sport—these things make up the sum of their existence.[1]

There are some great souls who say that 'life' for them means loyalty to noble principle—'for me to live is to obey the Divine voice within me.' 'We must vote for the highest in us as against the insinuations of the lower.'

¶ When Maggie Tulliver was assailed by temptation what she said was: 'We cannot choose happiness either for ourselves or for another. We cannot tell where happiness may lie. We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that for the sake of obeying the Divine voice within us—for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives. I know this belief is hard,' she said. 'It has slipped away from me again and again, but I have felt that if I let it go forever I should have no light through the darkness of this life.'

But St Paul does not say, 'For to me to live is loyalty to noble principle.' Why not? It is for this reason that no altar was ever erected to a principle, no prayer was ever offered to a principle. A principle has little influence until it shines through a personality. When the soldiers followed Garibaldi for the liberation of Italy, they knew the truth that would make Italy free, but that truth was not compelling until it shone through the red-shirted figure of Garibaldi. Principles have no power; they are nothing, until they shine in a life.

The Apostle never saw Jesus in the flesh, but he saw Jesus in vision. And he went through villages which, years after the Master had passed through them, were still fragrant with His presence. He doubtless had talked with mothers whose little children Jesus had taken into His arms. He had conversed with shepherds who were full of the story of a mar-

[1] J. W. W. Moeran, *Preaching by Parable*, 75.

vellously self-sacrificing life. So he was able to say, 'It has pleased God to reveal his Son in me.' 'I live, but not I: Christ liveth in me.'

3. There is no analogy for such an experience. It is more intimate than the experience of a father who lives fervently in the career of his son. It is more whole-hearted than the life of a woman whose whole existence is bound up with her loved one. It is more self-surrendering than the loyalty of the old-time serf, who vowed fealty to his lord in the words, 'I am liege man of thine for life and limb and earthly worship.' It is nothing less than the identification of all that is good in us with the living Christ, and then the actual attempt to live Christ in days and nights, and dreams and deeds.

¶ Dostoievski says, 'I believe there is nothing deeper, lovelier, more sympathetic, more perfect than the Saviour. I say to myself with jealous love that not only is there no one else like Him, but that there could be no one else like Him. I would even say more: If anybody could prove to me that Jesus is outside of truth, and if the truth really did exclude Jesus, I would prefer to stay with Him, and not with truth.'

The distinction between A.D. and B.C. is not merely an affair of the calendar; it is an affair of a new quality of life that revolutionized not only our time reckonings, but our soul reckonings! If you take Jesus away from art and from music and from human institutions, what would be left? His influence is without any parallel. We say with a deep and joyous conviction, that Christ is the only hope of this mercenary, grasping, wistful, aspiring earth.

There will be plenty to gather round the Christ when this mortal coil is shuffled off! The light will be so much nearer then, and probably we shall understand. But here and now, against the background of worldly standards and earthly decisions, can we say, 'To me to live is Christ'?

Of course it will follow that to die is gain. Immortality is never an argument. There is no logic that can prove to us that we are immortal. But if we possess even in small measure the life of Christ within our life, we do not need an argument to prove immortality, because we have immortality; and immortality is not an argument or a doctrine or a dogma—immortality is a quality of life. That is why Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection,' not, 'I teach it.' We do not believe it: we have it. Of course it follows that if to live is Christ, to die is gain of Christ. It is inevitable.

The Privilege of Suffering

Phil. i. 29.—'For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.'

It is certainly true that, the more we ponder Christian ideas, the more readily shall we confess that Christianity has at least turned certain words and the meanings of words upside down. And this very wonderful thing in addition has to be confessed, that when we see the thing as Christianity would have it, namely, upside down, there is no doubt it looks very much better.

Dr Hutton tells us that this is the puzzling quality of characteristically Russian thought. It is all strange until you think again, when a misgiving gathers about your mind as to whether from the point of view of God, of Christ, it may not be nearer to the truth. When the Russians as our allies during the War were piling up their millions of casualties, a prominent publicist said, 'You send us a telegram when we have gained a victory, assuring us of your love. But we do not need a telegram assuring us of your love when we have gained a victory; we are very happy. Why do you not send us a telegram assuring us of your love on the morning after some great defeat? Then we would love it, for then we need it.' This would never have occurred to us, Dr Hutton adds, and yet it would have been a great thing to do.

We have the same feeling of paradox, of the contradiction to what seems natural, in these words of St Paul to the Philippians, words in which he tells them that to them it had been granted, as having something of the nature of a favour, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him—a matter which a great many people with various depths of meaning may be capable of—but also to suffer for His sake. They are, so to speak, he tells them, Christians of the first rank. There are gradations of privilege. In the world the coveted posts are the places of ease, and men are accounted fortunate in proportion as they attain to a leisured indolence. But in the Kingdom of our Lord ease is placed at a discount, and the

fortunate ones are those who are privileged to suffer in His behalf.

¶ Dr Griffith John has told us that one day, when he was surrounded by a hostile Chinese crowd, and violence was used, he put up his hand to his smitten face, and when he withdrew it, and saw it bathed in blood, he was possessed by an extraordinary sense of exaltation, and he rejoiced that he had been 'counted worthy to suffer for His name.'

1. *The Problem of Suffering.*—There is no doubt that suffering has always been a baffling subject for the human mind. But there is an aspect of the problem that we are often in danger of forgetting. Suffering may be regarded as an effect whose cause must in the last resort be sought in God, but it may also be looked at as a *cause* whose effect justifies its presence as one of the working forces of the world. The two problems are not the same, but they are two aspects of one subject. The solution of the one does not help us much in the solution of the other, but both are equally important. The consideration of suffering as a cause is productive of richer results than the consideration of suffering as an effect. In the latter case we are questioning the reason for its presence, in the former we have accepted it as a great force in the moral, like gravity in the physical, realm. The suffering which paralyses us as a problem inspires us as an opportunity for a manifestation of that compassion and help which make us akin to God.

What was the relation of Christ to this problem of suffering? Apparently the problem did not exist. Though He was pre-eminently the Man of Sorrows, though His life was from beginning to end clouded with suffering, yet, as far as we can see, the problem never presented itself to His thought, or entered into His teaching. No one has ever entered into such loving and trustful relation with the Father as did Jesus Christ, no one has ever conceived of God in such deep ethical terms, and yet, as far as we can understand from the records of His life which have come down to us, the problem of His own suffering or the suffering with which He was confronted every day never in the slightest degree interfered with that perfectly trustful communion between His spirit and God which is the distinguishing feature of His unique life. He found no difficulty such as other minds have found in reconciling the presence of suffering with His conception of God as the Father. In those serene heights of religious thought and feeling in which Christ moved we find not a trace of that perplexed thought due to a realization of what we call the problem of suffering. It is difficult to see what other explanation there can be of this significant fact besides that which connects suffering, not with the actions, but with the very nature, of God. He who was at one with the Father found no 'problem' either in His own personal suffering or in the suffering of others. On the question of suffering, as distinct from the problem, the attitude of Christ is definite and clear. Suffering was constantly before Him; it shaped His ministry and coloured all His teaching and called forth His sympathy and His help. But He discussed its justification as little as He did the sequence of the seasons, or any other manifestation of God's natural order. As a problem it never presented itself to His mind. He has not solved the problems of life which we have constructed, but He has given us His judgment upon life, and in the light of that judgment things are not what they seem. Suffering stands revealed as good rather than evil, sorrow is transfigured with a Divine glory, and even around the black cloud with which the problem of evil darkens human life there is a golden glory which points to the final goal of good.[1]

¶ On one occasion Dr Jowett was admiring the deep blackness of a raven's wings. 'Ah,' said a countryman, who was standing by, 'but you should see them when the sun shines on them.' And to see sorrow in its unique and incomparable lustre, one must see it with the light of God shining upon it.[2]

2. *The Privilege of Suffering.*—When one comes to think of it, Christianity involves suffering. And it is the very basis of our hope for the world that there will always be an elect and saving community scattered over the earth who are willing to endure, and to endure for the sake of something or someone invisible. No man can be a Christian who is not now, at this very moment, suffering something for Christ's sake. It may be some young man who is day by day fighting against some low business of his own soul or flesh. It may be some man later on re-

[1] Bernard Lucas, *Conversations with Christ*, 137.
[2] E. Herman, *The Touch of God*, 103.

fusing some success or advantage for the sake of a scruple of integrity, flinging the wretched thirty pieces of silver in the face of some spirit that is trying to seduce him. Or it may be one, at any time in life, called upon to endure some loss in the region of human love, or some lesser loss in the region of fortune or of friends, who nevertheless will not allow his soul to become bitter within him. But in every such case, where one, on behalf of Christ, endures, there you have a Christian. It is the nature of every belief that it costs you something. A person who has social ambitions will lie awake at night planning how to promote his or her social prestige. They believe in the thing, therefore they pay for it. When we are unwilling to pay for a thing it means that we have ceased to believe in it; and 'to pay for' means to suffer for.

We see, however, what the Apostle meant in drawing a distinction between classes even of Christian people, and in saying that there are Christians, as it were, of the first class and Christians of the second class. We cannot have lived long in the world if we have not seen that there are people of whom we should be justified in saying that, if this present world were all that is, they have a hard time. This does not refer to the matter of riches or poverty. Real happiness has very little to do with riches or poverty, though we agree that there is a depth of poverty in which the spiritual life may be almost impossible, just as we are equally confident that there is a height of luxury in which Christianity is equally impossible. What we are thinking of is something that we have all seen; that there are those who, it would appear, are elected to a certain additional strain upon their faith. This may have come to them because of an extra sensitiveness which they have. Our capacity for suffering depends, of course, upon the degree of our sensitiveness—our openness to pain. To such people, to all indeed whose case it fits, St Paul says here something which should have the effect of steadying their minds and bringing back dignity and self-respect. Speaking to people who for the sake of Christ were really enduring some hard and adverse thing—enduring not merely some trouble of the mind, but enduring some concrete suffering at the hands of the world, suffering which they could have escaped if they had only lowered the flag of their soul—St Paul bids them consider whether God may not have called upon them in particular to endure this added suffering, and that it was, strictly speaking, a proof that in God's view they were able to endure more than ordinary people could endure.

'It hath been granted . . . to suffer.' It is a sort of royal warrant, a Divine election to a sacred office. It would seem that in order to keep this world from going to pieces a certain amount of suffering, of endurance or substitutionary pain, must continually be borne. And those who, in slack apostate times or in times of trial, stand fast are Christ's Swiss Guard, as it were, on whom He relies if all others should fall away. They are the friends such as at the wedding feast He found as He entered, sitting in a lowly place, to whom He said, 'Friends, come up higher, nearer to where I am sitting; for I perceive that ye are able to drink of the cup which I drank and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I was baptized.'

¶ There was a Moslem prophet. Some think he was a lunatic, but others rank him with the greatest of the saints. They crucified him, and as he hung there in agony, he lifted up his heart in thanksgiving to God. 'Of His own cup He lets me drink; such is true hospitality,' he cried exultantly, grateful that God was letting him share in His own pain for this poor, sin-sick world.[1]

Strife or Love

Phil. ii. 3.—'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.'

Hitherto the Philippian Church had given St Paul unalloyed gladness. He asks them now to fulfil his joy, to make his cup brim to overflowing. He tells them that the way to do this is to display in their midst unity, and peace, and love. He demands from them more than personal faith and righteous life. He longs to see the Christian *social* virtues fully developed among them, till they become a true Christian community, of one heart and mind, ruled not by selfishness but by love. Such a society, inspired with such noble motives, where every part found its fit place in humble and devoted service, would have something of the radiant beauty of the life of Christ. In furtherance then of this ideal he says, 'Let nothing be done

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Hero in Thy Soul*, 75.

through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.'

The word translated 'strife' means not so much personal as party contention, factiousness, setting up one section against another, creating divisions, each seeking to get the better of the other, each with its party cry, and each dominated by party spirit, one saying, as happened in the Corinthian Church, 'I am of Paul,' another, 'I am of Apollos,' instead of being all moved by mutual desire for the good of all. 'Vain-glory' of course means the personal vanity which incites a man to fight for his own hand, and push his own claims on all occasions, regardless of other and wider interests. These are the two great social plagues which keep a community from realizing the peace and concord of the Christian ideal, where all are for each and each is for all—the undue development of the spirit of faction, and the undue assertion of selfish personal aims. Opposed to both, Paul puts the humility which is born of love and which has its outcome in generous service.

1. There are two great opposing motives in life, two methods of doing work—strife and love, competition and co-operation; and it is not difficult to say with which of the two rests the hope of the race for a higher civilization and true religion. The spur of competition is a useful motive within limits, but all social progress has hitherto been got by strengthening and restricting the limits. Civilization only begins when co-operation of some sort comes in, when the struggle for existence ceases to be a purely personal one. Progress has been achieved through the social bonds, through the family, through community of interests, through patriotism, through union never through disunion, through love never through strife. That is one reason why the future of the race is bound up in the future of Christianity. All true social progress must be along the lines laid down by Christ.

We overrate the value to society of ambition and self-seeking. We are often told of the advantage derived through men being spurred on in competition by vain-glory and by getting the better of their fellows. Even Bacon, in his Essay which satirizes vain-glory, speaks of its advantage in great enterprises of business and state. He thinks that in military commanders and soldiers it increases courage, and even in the region of literature has a good effect. 'In fame of learning, the flight will be slow without some feathers of ostentation.' We can see how highly we value emulation as a motive if we think how closely it is associated with almost every department of life—education for example. We imagine that little can be done without the stimulus of competition, so we establish prizes at school and college, and have our full-blown system of cram and examination—with what fatal result on true education we are beginning to find out. We habitually overestimate the lower motives in life—emulation, and the desire to get on in the world by elbowing others. The highest motive is always the strongest if we would only believe it. Is not patriotism a stronger and nobler motive to a soldier than any selfish one could possibly be? Is not love of some sort stronger than strife for any enterprise whatever? In education would not love of learning be a deeper inspiration than any artificial stimulus of competition? A boy can leave school with an armful of prizes and be a dullard all his life, just because he has never had the love of learning as a motive.

¶ That seems to me the poisonous flavour of my own schooldays—the marks, the distinctions, the athletic prizes. Everything done for those who could seize and hold and perform, nothing for the unselfish and slow and clumsy, except discredit and contempt and the sympathy full of humiliating pity. The children who ought to be rewarded are those who, with no hope of success, turn out patient and honest work, love duty, and practise brotherliness. Yet these are pitied for stupidity and sheepishness, and the crown falls upon dash, and aplomb, and quickness. The end should be the love of work, and the content of leisure, and the peace of home. I think that if such ideals had been held up before me, I could have been trained in them and come to love them.[1]

2. For the highest kind of work, as for the highest kind of life, strife and vain-glory are not helps but hindrances. They ruin the *quality* of work. This can be seen in its deadliest effects in all forms of art. When a man ceases to work for his work's sake, when his chief object is to surpass his fellows in the estimation of the public, he lays himself open to the worst of all

[1] A. C. Benson.

temptations—to truckle to popular taste, to tricks of flashy style; and his work of necessity deteriorates. How can even his hand keep its cunning when his heart has lost the vision? The ultimate motive to a true artist must be not money, or fame, or rivalry, but love, love of art, love of beauty, love of men, and whatever higher love than these is possible. And if we are to judge of work by its quality, will not some of our modern methods of competition be condemned at once? We only need to think of the old hammer-wrought ironwork, the old stonework of house and church lasting through the centuries, the old beautiful woodwork; and to think of so much of our modern shoddy work, with our time-limits, and competitive plans, and estimates, to feel how much love went to the one sort of work, and how much strife or vain-glory is at the bottom of the other sort.

If this is true in our workaday life, how much more forcibly does it come home to us in our social relations with other men? No society of men can be kept together permanently on principles of strife and vain-glory. These are disintegrating principles. If such alone were the motives, no body of men could live together, or work together, or even worship together. We need more than the cash-nexus which Carlyle so eloquently condemned. We cannot resolve all human relationships to economic principles without degrading human life. The highest motives are the strongest motives; and when any region of life is lived on the lower plane, sooner or later it brings its own nemesis.

¶ What period of history was more humiliating to England than that part of the eighteenth century depicted in the *Letters of Junius* with their bitter satire, when corruption was prevalent and every man seemed to have his price, when self-seekers and place-seekers hustled each other in Parliament, when Edmund Burke and a few others alone stood for political principle, for duty to the public, and even for true love of country? Just when factious strife and selfish ambition were at their height, Britain was far on the downgrade.

3. What, then, is the alternative? Over against strife and vain-glory St Paul puts the humility of love, 'in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself.' Take all the regions in which we have found the other motives to fail—work, art, education, social life—and we shall see how penetrating and how potent this motive is. When did strife produce a picture? When did vain-glory make a scholar? It is a commonplace of the wisdom of the ages that humility is the very beginning of wisdom. Only when a man has forgotten self, only when he is overmastered by a larger passion, has his work on life become great.

Even for happiness, strife and vanity bring nothing but the serpent of envy which only stings one's own self, the jaundiced eye which discolours the world because another is preferred before oneself. But the very point about this Christian humility is that it finds its joy in the things which in the other case bring misery. Every one who has tried it knows it to be so. 'We live by admiration, hope, and love.' In the Christian view of life, service is the universal rule, and each has a place in that service. All gifts are held for the benefit of all. They are no credit to those who have them; and it is no discredit not to have them. Special capacity, special cleverness, special gifts only mean special responsibility. Excellence is to be admired and loved, not envied and detracted. If each esteemed other so, would not the stock of happiness be increased? There is something wrong when men are filled with envy at superiority, instead of simply doing their very best themselves, and humbly thanking God for every gift He has given the world through another.

¶ 'It is impossible to express,' says Ruskin, 'the quantity of delight I used to feel in the power of Turner and Tintoret when my own skill was nascent only; and all good artists will admit that there is far less personal pleasure in doing a thing beautifully than in seeing it beautifully done.'

Does this Christian humility seem an impossible alternative to strife and vain-glory? Does it appear too hard for the weak heart of man? It is hard; but it is not hard for love. So to esteem others, so to subordinate self to them, so to recognize the excellences of others, can only be the fruit of love; for only love's eye is quick to find out the lovely things in other men. St Paul is writing to Christians, and in all this he is only setting forth what their faith means.

The Things of Others

Phil. ii. 4.—'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.'

This is neither a complete sentence, nor does it yield its complete sense apart from what has just preceded it; we must take it in connection with the whole paragraph of which it is the culminating portion. Let us glance in the first place at the context, and try to understand the situation at which it hints: 'If there is therefore any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.'

1. The first characteristic which strikes us in this passage, when we read it as part of a real letter addressed to real people, is the extraordinarily pleading tone in which it is couched. We cannot help feeling that the Apostle wrote these words with a strong sense of urgency. They are heart-beats, but we can tell that his heart was beating anxiously. He would not beg and pray his readers with such instancy of reiteration to be of the same mind, of one accord, having the same love, if that accord had not been in some danger.

As a matter of fact we can easily understand the causes that might lead to discord in such a community. Small as it was, the Church of Philippi already contained within its borders representatives of each of the three great divisions in race of the Roman world. The purple-dealer from Thyatira; the slave-girl, who was a Macedonian, and apparently born on the spot, and who was, on account of her powers of divination, so profitable a possession to her owner; the Roman colonist, who had charge of the public prison—all became converts to the faith. Here we have an important branch of commerce represented; there the vast numbers of people, who in very various grades made their livelihood in official positions under government, while the divining-girl was a member of that vast and unhappy class to whom the gospel brought more relief than to any other—in whose persons the rights of human nature were as completely ignored as if they had been altogether extinguished: the slave population of the Empire.[1]

Now, when you get a number of people, mostly of fairly pronounced individuality and exhibiting diversities of race, social position, culture, and temperament, all flung together in a joint enterprise, it will require a good deal of grace to prevent disruption; and there will be strong temptation for things to be done in a spirit of faction and vain-glory. A common enthusiasm, a common belief, may bring a very heterogeneous crowd together into momentary association, but to fuse them into an organic whole requires not a sudden flash of light, but a steady flame of love. All movements and causes, but especially religious movements and causes, have to guard against the vanity, the elbowing and domineering methods of individuals, against those who, consciously or unconsciously, use the common cause merely as a platform for their own exaltation, or those who are constitutionally unable to see that there is more than one way—to wit, *their* way—of doing a thing; in a word, against the disintegrating effects of egoism.

And so the Apostle appeals with Christian tactfulness to the deepest experiences his friends have shared, to the comfort they have known in Christ, to the mutual consolation their love has been to them in hard times, to the spiritual fellowship they have enjoyed with one another, to acts of helpfulness and practical sympathy that have bound them together. And, finally, to their proved and tested affection for himself, 'Fulfil ye *my* joy, that ye be of the same mind.'

Whereupon, still most careful not to hurt, he hints at the source of such trouble as there is among his readers. There are those in their midst, not wanting in zeal, but rather with a surplus of energy, who look each just to his or her own affairs; are engrossed in what they themselves are doing, and take their corner of the work not merely for the centre round which everything else should revolve, but for the whole. They are blind to the useful and devoted activities of others.

2. Let us note the Apostle's proposed remedy. He does not say, 'Do not look to your own

[1] H. P. Liddon, *Sermons at St Paul's*, 90.

affairs,' but 'look *also* to those of others.' When we see that other people labour just as faithfully at tasks differing from ours, when we realize the effort that goes to the cultivating of their corner of the field and the harvest borne by that effort, we shall not therefore abandon ours, but arrive at a juster—that is, a more modest—idea of our importance in the scheme of things as a whole. To many people there applies the remark which Kipling, in a story of his, places on the lips of a German naturalist: 'Mein friend, you haf too much ego in your cosmos.' In other words, they are wholly preoccupied with personal matters, and everything else must give way to these. Such people make uncomfortable partners in any enterprise or relationship, because they present far too much frictional surface.

And when, to such as these, trials come, when some hope of theirs is frustrated, they bear themselves as though no one else had ever had to endure the like. Especially is it true as regards our troubles and afflictions that true wisdom bids us look away from our own to those of others:

> I said, All labour, yet no less
> Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
> Fail I alone in words and deeds?
> Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
> Look at the end of work, contrast
> This present of theirs with the hopeful past.

We recover our moral balance when it is borne in upon us that after all in the bitter thing that has befallen us, hard though it is to bear, we are not specially singled out, but are one with an exceedingly great army of fellow-sufferers, who have to gather themseves up from the dust and proceed on the journey of life as bravely as they can. And in the realization of that truth we are lifted out of our fruitless repining and rebellion into the fellowship of the Cross—into a tenderer sympathy with our brothers and sisters—and sorrow, which was such an unspeakably bitter cup, becomes a sacrament, the symbol of a holy communion.

3. What other 'things' of our own are they to which we are liable to look with too concentrated a gaze? Obviously they are chiefly of two kinds—our own interests and our own merits.

It is want of imagination that lies at the root of a vast deal of real, hard selfishness. There are people whom it never seems to strike how their acts affect others, or that those others have rights, feelings, possibilities which they ought to consider. They do not think of these things, they do not look to the things of others, or they could not deal with their fellow-beings as they do. The old hackneyed line still expresses the truth of the matter—'Evil is wrought by want of thought'; only such want of thought is no excuse.

¶ 'If suddenly,' says Ruskin, 'in the midst of the enjoyments of the palate and lightnesses of heart of a London dinner-party, the walls of the chamber were parted, and through their gap the nearest human beings who were famishing and in misery were borne into the midst of the company feasting and fancy free; if, pale with sickness, horrible in destitution, broken by despair, body by body they were laid upon the soft carpet, one beside the chair of every guest—would only the crumbs of the dainties be cast to them? Would only a passing glance, a passing thought be vouchsafed to them? Yet the actual facts, the real relations of each Dives and Lazarus, are not altered by the intervention of the house-wall between the table and the sick-bed—by the few feet of ground (how few!) which are, indeed, all that separate the merriment from the misery.'

¶ At the close of the war between Russia and Japan, many thousands of admirers gathered to welcome Admiral Togo back to Yokohama, covered with the glory of his conquests. But it came out afterwards that the Admiral had requested his own son not to come to hail the fleet, because so many parents had lost sons, and so many sons had lost parents that it would have been too painful for them to have witnessed the affectionate greeting between the great chieftain and his boy. Admiral Togo strikingly *imagined* others, and felt their experiences as though they had been his own.[1]

And next to our own interests, what of our own merits? Again, St Paul does not mean us to ignore such merits as we possess—he, the man who had boldly declared that he did not count himself one whit behind the very chiefest apostles—but we are to practise a sense of proportion, and not artificially to enhance our own excellences by turning a blind eye to those of others. Now, when Paul says that we are each

[1] N. M. Caie, *The Secret of a Warm Heart*, 16.

to count the other better than ourselves, that may seem a hard injunction; but what he means, though he expresses it in characteristically heightened language, is that we are to accustom ourselves to look with a generous appreciation upon the performances, and even the attempts, of others rather than upon our own.

¶ Nothing is more significant of Browning's essential nobility than his enjoyment of 'the things of others,' and of the appreciation they won. We can, perhaps, understand his delight in the fact that his wife's poems, to the last day of his life, outsold his by far; but his spontaneous homage to Tennyson, his undimmed love for the poet whose popularity so completely overshadowed his own, is a mark of true greatness.

For most of us it is salutary, whenever we think we have done rather well in something, to look in some other direction, preferably at some achievement that dwarfs ours, instead of exulting in our own.

¶ The story is told of Whistler that once when he had a picture hung in the Academy he walked straight past all the other paintings without so much as a glance, halted before his own, gazed at it for half an hour, exclaimed, 'Amazing!' and marched out again. But there is another incident which is more to Whistler's credit than that piece of affectation. It was at a friend's house, when he had, ungraciously enough, consented to look through a portfolio of black-and-white drawings by Aubrey Beardsley, then an unknown beginner, whom he, moreover, disliked; but presently he found his admiration quickened in spite of himself, and, with flashing eyes, exclaimed, 'Boy, this is genius!' and Beardsley, overwhelmed, burst into tears of happiness.[1]

The Mind of Christ

Phil. ii. 5.—'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (R.V.).

1. This is one of the most daring utterances in the whole history of the daring of man's mind. The rendering of the Revised Version is perhaps just as near as we can get to the idea inherent in the original. Begin to think as Christ thinks! But is that possible? The Apostle goes on to describe this Jesus whose mind is recommended to the adoption of his readers. Let us consider the picture that is given to us of the mind of Christ.

(1) Who was He? The Apostle does not shrink from the most astounding and wonderful statements about His person. He says: 'He existed in the form of God.' Before He appeared in our world He lived. There are those who say that the idea of pre-existence has no meaning for us at all, that only the earthly story of Jesus is significant. But that is not the apostolic way of looking at the matter. It is not the way of Paul; it is not the way of John; it is not the way of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is of immense importance to recognize the fact that for the Apostle Paul the pre-existence of Christ is no mere belief in something abstract, metaphysical, remote and unreal; something that does not have any bearing upon the earthly life of Jesus. For Paul the whole quality and meaning and historic value of the earthly life of Jesus are drawn from the fact that it is the life of an incarnate Being—One who has come into the world, having existed 'in the form of God.' His was the mind that shared the eternal life of God, that lay behind, before, and above all creative processes, a mind that was the mind of God, active in the task of creating the universe and making history. Can we have that mind?

(2) The Apostle goes on to describe that mind at another stage. He says that He who had that mind 'stripped himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man.' Let us think, then, of the historic Jesus. Does the Apostle mean that we can have His mind? His was the mind which so knew God and man that His words about God and man rule the history of human thought. He did not unveil a system, but He announced irresistible truths. And what He said has become the ultimate court of reference for all succeeding speculations of men. Somehow His teaching has entered into the substance of history and has so written history that man's very thought-processes are now being controlled by the principles of Jesus and the statements that He laid down about God and man. Can we have that mind?

(3) Take another aspect of it. This was the mind of the Man whose conscience was without stain. He alone, of all who have seen the Divine light, having looked into His own heart,

[1] J. Warschauer.

found it luminous with the will of God. He alone had no confession of failure to make. In the way of conscious sin, in the way of moral confession, in the way of self-seeking, in the way of false freedom, in the way that takes you into the most intimate life of the human spirit with itself, away down there where sin for man is inevitable, Jesus was without stain. And remember that sinless conscience arose from His mind, His way of thinking, His characteristic insight and understanding of things. Can we have that mind?

¶ He who with incomparable keenness has pursued sin into the inmost recesses of the heart, found no shadow of guilt, even in the most critical hours of His life, arising in His own heart to transform the countenance of His heavenly Father into the countenance of a judge—not in the storm which threatened His life, not in the total wreck of His earthly hopes, not even in Gethsemane or on Golgotha.[1]

(4) Or, take the description that is given of Him in the next 'state,' for it is said that God 'highly exalted him, and gave unto him a name which is above every name.' The whole universe is at His feet in worship; things in heaven, things in earth, things under the earth, are all destined to worship Jesus Christ. But think of His mind who is to accept the worship of the universe! When the lowest of all beings conceive of their highest, and name their highest, Jesus is to accept that name. When they whose minds are of the holiest and the loveliest temper dwell absorbed on things Divine until their hearts are bursting with the glory of unspeakable visions, and then sing them up into the praise of Jesus Christ, He is to look down through it all to their souls and accept them for Himself. What kind of a mind is that before which the universe shall bow in appropriate worship and adoration? And yet that mind shall accept it all in utter perfectness and purity of soul. Can we have that mind?

2. Now, why has the Apostle said all this? Has he not set a most irrational task before the souls of men? Has he not reduced the gospel already to absurdity when, after so beholding the relations of God and humanity in Christ, he then says: 'Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus'?

If we study this passage we shall see that running through it there is another current of thought, another element of the mind of Christ. We shall see that Paul has thus described the mind of Christ in its vastness that we may be able to behold the intensity of its quality, and that it is, not the measure of the mind, but the goodness of it, that he is thinking of. The Apostle believes that his readers will more readily comprehend and feel overwhelmed by the quality of the mind of God in Christ when they have thus deliberately beheld and considered its wonderful history in outline. It is against the canvas of that infinite process that the ethical qualities of the Son of God stand out. And they who think that the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ has no bearing upon the practical values of life have not got down to the foundation of things. They have not seen into the nature of the morality of God, and they have not yet penetrated to the influence of God in the formation of human character. For it is only when man has learned to know and understand the character of God—that he has any chance of having a Godlike character of his own.

(1) In the first place, the Apostle tells us that, 'existing in the form of God, he counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but stripped himself, taking the form of a slave.' Evidently that is the moral process through which the mind of the Son of God went, a life history with a moral explanation. Indeed, we cannot describe the relations of God and Nature, of the Infinite and the finite, in terms of metaphysics only. We must pass over into ethics. We must go over into the morality of the universe and consider the heart of God who is behind it all. The Apostle insists that we shall behold this mind, which is over it all and in it all, as it strips itself of its conditions of eternal life and experience, and appears in the terms and in the conditions of a slave.

Now, apart from the possibility of the process, which he takes for granted, what is the moral quality of it? It is *generosity*. Generosity, the first and supreme quality of the creative mind of God, is revealed in the coming of Christ. His spirit was of such a kind that it went out to share, by generous gift to others, even that life with God which it possessed by inherent and eternal rights of its own. And that sharing with others did not content itself with equality. It stooped far down and was

[1] W. Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology*, i. 76.

willing to take the form of a slave, to humble itself to the lowest condition. That is the quality of the generosity of God. Elsewhere we find it described as the love of God; but love is simply generosity charged with purpose and emotion. Generosity, when it is true and rich and wise and pure, is just love, love eternal, uttering itself in action. And that wonderful Divine intensity of the generous mind is what the Apostle urges upon us. We are commanded and urged to think of it until generosity in all its beauty and nobleness becomes supremely attractive to us, until it becomes a spirit that enters in to possess us and fill us with itself. It is the essence of the mind of Christ.

¶ Two humble brethren from Herrnhut once waited upon the Chamberlain of the King of Denmark to seek to obtain his approval of their intention to go as Christian missionaries to the Island of St Thomas. On the Chamberlain's reminding them that the island was occupied by coloured men who were slaves, that slaves would regard them as belonging to a superior race, as possessed of feelings of disdain for those less favoured, and as flinging down from their lofty platform the message they bore from across the sea, there came the immediate rejoinder, 'We will sell ourselves for a period as slaves that we may stand on the same level with those whom we long to help, look into their eyes, tell them of the Father's love, of the renunciation of Christ, and lift them up to the privileges of the sons of God.'[1]

(2) Then look at the next stage. When He had taken 'the form of a servant' He was 'made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself.' Now *humility*, like generosity, is one of those marvellous graces or moral qualities so full of variety and richness that no one illustration, no one description, will exhaust it. For what is humility? Is it saying that I am nothing compared with others? Is it the feeling of inadequacy for any task? Why, that is paralysis! Is it to ignore the facts of life, so that a man who has lived a life of integrity says: 'I am no better than the vicious and the criminal'? Why, that is moral blindness! Is it the soul seeking to be utterly unknown, avoiding one's fellows, afraid of the blazing light? Why, that may be the mere simulation of a grace; it may be but running away from duty; it may be the avoiding of the Cross.

We get to the essence of humility when we come to the thirteenth chapter of John and find Jesus illustrating it, and that in two distinct ways, in that scene where He washed His disciples' feet. First of all, He illustrated His own humility by going down to serve His disciples in their need. To do anything for anybody else that they need is always the act of humility, if it is done sincerely. But Jesus did not only illustrate humility by His own action. He illustrated it by what He demanded. When Simon Peter said: 'Thou shalt not wash my feet,' Jesus said: 'Thou hast no part in me.' What Jesus meant was that Simon must learn to depend upon God's grace for his cleansing. That is humility. Humility is composed of these two elements, which must work together to produce its complete beauty. It is willingness to serve men, founded upon the willingness to lean upon God.

Not to be served, O Lord, but to serve man
  All that I can,
And as I minister unto his need,
  Serve Thee indeed:
So runs the law of Love that hath been given
  To earth from Heaven.

What, if the task appointed me be mean?
  Wert Thou not seen
To gird Thee with the towel, as was meet,
  To wash the feet
Of Thy disciples, whom Thou would'st befriend
  Unto the end?

For meanest work becomes the noblest part,
  When a great heart,
Pitiful, stoops to comfort our distress,
  Or to impress
A sealing kiss on penitence, fresh clad
  In raiment sad.

And if the wanderer's feet be soiled and sore,
  So much the more
He needs a tender hand to cleanse and heal,
  And make him feel
There is no task that love will shrink to do
  Life to renew.[1]

(3) There is a third element mentioned here: He 'became obedient.' 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of

[1] J. Macmillan.

[1] Walter C. Smith.

the cross.' Now *obedience* is not a popular word. There seems to be abroad in our democratic atmosphere the notion that the way to assert one's manhood is to break any law that is in sight. This feeling is abroad throughout our whole domestic, social and scholastic system —the feeling that we ought to get rid of any authority over us and assert or 'realize' ourselves and insist upon our individual will, without regard to the power of any institution or tradition of garnered experience. But such an attitude is far from the way that leads to the fellowship of God through the spirit of Christ. When Christ came He became obedient, and his obedience stretches from the throne to the Cross.

There are two ways of obeying. There is the obedience of the person that does not understand, the obedience of the child who must simply trust the father's and mother's wisdom. It is the child-will, which is taught to obey and to trust the larger wisdom encircling its life, that ripens into the strong man or woman of after years. But then, that obedience will be always an incomplete kind of thing as long as the mind does not understand why it must obey. There is another and higher way of obeying than that of the untutored and untrained child-mind. Obedience becomes the very height of freedom when the meaning and worth of a law have been grasped and accepted. If God will show us His purpose and help us to understand it and enable us to take it to ourselves, then we shall obey in utter freedom of will as well as deep subjection of soul. So it was with Jesus. He saw the Father's purpose for His children. He shared the generosity of that purpose. He shared the wonder and the glory of what it would effect for mankind, and when He obeyed He obeyed as making the will of His Father the law of His free Spirit, of His perfect obedience.

The Meekness of the Cross

Phil. ii. 5-8.—'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross' (R.V.).

1. *The Humility of Christ.*—The Atonement was the act of the Eternal, who, in the Person of the Son, emptied Himself of all that lifted Him above the race of men whom He came forth to redeem. He approaches mankind not as their benefactor, but as their debtor. The form of a slave is no human pageantry, but the sacramental expression of a Divine surrender. Tragedy enters into the very existence of the Living God. The Eternal Himself passes through the Valley of Humiliation. As the Bible shows us Redemption, it is not an Almighty Benefactor conferring a priceless boon upon His graceless children, but the Servant of servants, who lays aside His vesture and girds Himself as with an apron that He may wash His people's feet. 'He took upon him the form of a slave.' Those are the Apostle's words; and we denude them of their appropriate meaning if we fail to see that as St Paul spoke them it is God Himself to whom they are properly applied, and not alone that Manhood which, in the terms of our orthodox theology, we say that God assumed. For He who from all eternity was in the form of God is God. God, and none but God, could humble Himself when, renouncing those riches which were His before the worlds, for our sakes He became poor, and from a life of servitude passed to a Cross of Shame.

When heaven and earth were yet unmade,
  When time was yet unknown,
Thou in Thy bliss and majesty
  Didst live and love alone.

Humility was not first brought to the birth in the stable at Bethlehem, nor was the Cross the earliest throne where it received the Crown. Its reign was already from of old when the morning stars sang together. It was as the sword in the hand of St Michael when Lucifer was thrust down from heaven. It is the spirit in which from creation's earliest dawn the Divine finger has wakened all things into life; the spirit in which a bounteous Providence, beholding the things that are in heaven and earth, has crowned the year with His goodness; the spirit in which the Father has wistfully sought the love and friendship of His children. Humility is not the creation of God's hand. It lives in the beating of His heart. As He loves, so He humbles Himself. And the death of His Son was no benefaction with which, out of the riches of an infinite liberality, He endowed the poor, but the offering with which

He pressed His suit upon a reluctant people, saying to each one of us, 'My son, give me thy heart.'

That is the consideration which gives to humility its true dignity and value in the character of the Christian man.

2. *Humility a Christian Grace.*—It is important to remember that the service of man need not involve the spirit of sacrifice which is the joy of Calvary, may lack that great humility which is the mind of Christ. 'Blessed are ye poor.' 'Be not ye called benefactors.'

The appeal of Jesus is to something higher than the merely moral man. Those who are indeed to be constrained by the love of Christ must be prepared for adventures into a region which lies beyond the ethics of the market-place. The graces of the Christian character—meekness, forgiveness, humility—are not such as can be expressed in terms of scientific analysis.

Watch Christ in His dealings with the young man who asked what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life. He had come prepared to do great things. There was nothing about him that was sordid or base. No sooner had the Master's eye rested on him than Jesus loved him. It is clear that in his great possessions the young man saw large possibilities of service. It was no selfish refusal to abandon the means of personal pleasure or sensuous delights that at length sent him away sorrowful. It was a true nobility that expressed itself in the eager question, 'What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?' The pathos of the story lies surely in the inability of an otherwise large heart to take the one step which should cut him off from the prospect of an honourable success and transform the spirit of magnanimous service into the heart of humble sacrifice. If Christ had said, 'Spend your wealth, occupy your time, devote your life for the good of others; place those exceptional advantages of head and heart with which liberal Fortune has endowed you at the service of your fellow-men,' would he not eagerly have embraced the prospect of a useful and honourable career which the Master had opened before him? But there was something so paradoxical in the demand which Jesus really made; the romance of it was altogether so baffling to the imagination that in the very moment of a glad surrender to a great enthusiasm the young man shrank back from the impossible. 'Sell all that thou hast. Make your act of distribution to the poor once for all. Cut off once and for ever all further opportunities for benevolence and kindly patronage. Stand forth in the simplicity of your personal life, and, when the time comes, be ready for the cross of a criminal and the ignominious death of a slave.'

It is just that demand, and nothing less, that Christ is making of the men of this generation. The age is full of generous impulse. There are, as of course there always have been, the idle rich, the frivolous wastrels, who are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph. But there is no lack of those who are not only willing but eager to make the best of their lives, to occupy positions of responsible usefulness, and to become real servants of their fellow-men.

But what if Christ should apply to any such the supreme test, 'Sell all that thou hast,' what then would be the answer? You would be perfect,—then renounce the opportunity. You seek a real adventure,—forgo your vantage-ground of wealth, station, official responsibility; take up your cross and follow Me.

¶ By the death of his father and elder brother, Carlo Borromeo, at the age of twenty-two, found himself heir to vast patrimonial estates. Although not yet ordained to the priesthood, he was in minor orders, and had already been made Archbishop of Milan and a Cardinal. His uncle, Pius IV., who was then Pope, told him that it was his duty to renounce the work he had just begun so ardently in the Church, as he was now a Count, and the head of a wealthy family. Instead of doing this, Carlo went in secret to a bishop and was privately ordained priest; thus, by an irrevocable step, cutting himself off from the joys of home life, and setting himself free for his loved work amongst the poor of Rome. Soon afterwards he gave up the palace he had bought in Rome, with its retinue of servants, and lived a life of simplicity.[1]

3. *The Source of Humility.*—Many descriptions of humility fall infinitely short of its true proportions.

(1) It is doubtless true that 'God is in heaven, and thou upon earth,' and that therefore it becomes the children of men to refrain their souls and keep them low. But just as many a man will talk bravely of the rights of property

[1] J. W. W. Moeran.

who is yet careful to add that 'of course, we are only stewards,' so the infinite distance which separates the creature from the Creator may encourage rather than repress a spirit which is the reverse of humility in the narrower sphere where comparison is not impossible, but inevitable. If it be true that, as the Hebrew prophet bids us, we are to walk humbly with our God, we must seek the principle of this self-abasement elsewhere than in the infinite distance which separates our little lives from His august Eternity.

(2) It is the same thought which prevents us from fixing this principle in the recognition of human sin. For those who have sinned, the broken and the contrite heart will never fail to be one aspect of Christian humility. God must indeed break the backbone of that stubborn pride to which the Cross is a perpetual scandal and Calvary a superfluity of pain. But in proportion as Christian men attain the height of their destiny, in proportion as they are conformed to the image of the Eternal Son—then, though to themselves the shadow of a sin-stained past is ever present, yet it is the reflexion of the heavenly vision which brings others to take knowledge of them that they have been with Him who is meek and lowly in heart.

(3) Humility, like every aspect of the character that is truly and properly Christian, must find its spring no less than its goal in the character of God. St Peter had entered into the mind of the Master when he gave the exhortation to be 'clothed with humility.'

The man whose character exhibits this crowning grace is he who in his work for the good of others is not unwilling to believe that those on whose behalf he labours are ever his superiors; who so banishes self-consciousness that his personality—and not his goods—is at the disposal of his fellow-men; and for whom the object of loving solicitude is 'the brother for whom Christ died.' The man who instinctively rejects all talk of inferior races, and to whom it is against the grain to speak of the aborigines or the proletariat, is learning to be humble. These are traits that reveal the man. They exhibit something of that Divine courtesy which could not bear help to mankind except in the character of a slave. Servitude to our fellow-men is an attitude that is painful to us all. But it is the brand of the Lord Jesus. That great Christian, St Paul, gave as the motive of his abundant labours, his tireless activity, his ceaseless solicitude, the truly remarkable reason—I am a debtor. As with Sir Walter Scott, the desire to pay his creditors quickened his genius. He was expressing the mind that was in Christ Jesus. How full of romance will be the career of him who day by day can go forth to new opportunities, new conquests, new achievements, under this great compulsion—I am a debtor! No man will be dull if only you can approach him with the thought—I am a debtor. No dependence will be a wound to our self-esteem if only joyfully and thankfully we can exclaim, 'We are debtors.'

It is never the service that he renders, but the spirit in which he renders it, that distinguishes the Christian. Whatever the conditions of his outward life may be, poverty is always his bride. Even if his station be splendid, he wears it but as the pontificals of office, beneath which are the coarse garments of his daily life. His ideal is not to live for others, but to die for them. The humble man is he who is capable of that only form of self-sacrifice which admits of no degrees because it is whole, final, and complete, and that is the sacrifice of himself.

The Name above every Name

Phil. ii. 9.—'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.'

1. New movements in the world always require new words and phrases in which to express themselves. We can see that law in operation. A new dialect has arisen to explain the theories of science, and an æsthetic dialect has been fashioned to set forth theories of art. Physical inventions and discoveries have created a host of strange terms to correspond. We were compelled to coin fresh words which our grandfathers never heard of before we could speak about motor cars and submarines and aeroplanes. The same thing occurs in times of religious revival. Old phrases are employed in a fresh sense, common words are put to nobler uses and transfigured with holier meaning. The Reformation, which changed men's beliefs and ideals throughout half Europe, also altered their religious language, and to this day a Protestant finds it hard to understand the devotional dialect of an earnest Roman Catholic. The great Methodist revival in the eighteenth

century left many deep marks upon England, but not the least of its results was to change and colour the evangelical vocabulary.

A similar process must have taken place in the beginning of the gospel. As soon as Christian faith spread abroad and rooted itself in heathen soil, its genius borrowed and adapted the language of its new home. The early Gentile converts did what the converts in our modern mission fields are constantly doing. They converted secular words to Christian uses. They invented a fresh vocabulary in which to embody their new faith. As we look back across the centuries at those little brotherhoods of believers, scattered along the shores of the Midland Sea, we discover, even in the pages of the New Testament, traces of a definite Christian dialect forming itself in the childhood of the Christian Church. In the Acts of the Apostles we find that the earliest Christians used often to speak of their faith simply as 'the Way.' Saul the Pharisee's commission from the High Priest ran that if he found 'any of the Way' he should bring them bound to Jerusalem, and in after years he confessed, 'I persecuted this way unto the death.' Just as early Methodists talked about 'the Society,' and modern Salvationists talk about 'the Army,' so these first disciples spoke of 'the Way.'

Yet another and more striking example of primitive Christian dialect appears in the habit which the early Christian disciples acquired of referring to 'the Name' as though that word stood for Jesus Christ Himself. The New Testament commonly designates our Lord either as Jesus, the Saviour, or as Christ, the Sent of God. After the Resurrection these were often combined and merged into one appellation. In the common language of Christians the Object of their faith was spoken of as Jesus Christ. But again and again we read how they preached concerning the Name. They are forbidden to speak to any man in this Name. Yet speak they must, for there is none other Name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. They gathered together for worship in His Name, and therefore with His Presence among them. When they offered a prayer, or gave a cup of cold water, or received a little child, it was in the Lord's Name.

No student of Scripture can fail to recognize in this primitive Christian usage the imitation of a far earlier Jewish habit of speech. In the Old Testament the Name of the Lord is mentioned almost as often as the Lord Himself. For an overpowering reverence had gathered round the sacred Hebrew name of Almighty God. The Jews came to treat it as a mystery, too awful to be spoken aloud. It was so high above every name that the rabbis shrank from pronouncing its syllables. In ordinary Jewish speech 'the Name' came to be used as an equivalent for Jehovah. In the age of the Advent the Jews habitually spoke of 'the Name': they worshipped the Name of the Lord. And thus it was not by accident that the Christian apostles fell into the custom of treating the Name of Jesus Christ in the same sort of fashion as their fathers had treated the ineffable, unutterable Name of Jehovah. As Reuchlin insists in his treatise, *De Verbo Mirifico*, such a usage has profound significance. It bears witness to the way in which those early disciples instinctively thought about Jesus Christ and felt towards Him.

¶ Longfellow, in *The Golden Legend*, tells how in a mediæval Scriptorium Friar Pacificus lays down his pen with these words:

> It is growing dark! Yet one line more,
> And then my work for to-day is o'er.
> I come again to the name of the Lord!
> Ere I that awful name record,
> That is spoken so lightly among men,
> Let me pause awhile, and wash my pen;
> Pure from blemish and blot must it be,
> When it writes that word of mystery!

Not many years after the Resurrection, the Lord's Name was passed on to His disciples. 'Galileans' had been their Jewish title of contempt. They had spoken of themselves as 'the brethren,' 'the faithful,' 'those of the Way.' But they were called Christians first at Antioch. The quick-witted mob of that profligate Syrian city invented as a nickname what was welcomed and worn as the proudest of all titles. Two centuries later Tertullian tells his heathen opponents: 'When you call us Christians, you bear witness to the Name of our Master.' One apostle writes of those 'who blaspheme the Holy Name by which ye are called,' and another apostle adds, 'If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.' For the Lord's words came true: 'Ye shall be brought before rulers, ye shall be hated of all men, for my name's

sake.' Such was the calling and election of the first missionaries who hazarded their lives for the Name of Jesus, and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name. Here lay the very test of their fidelity. Twice over the Christ of the Apocalypse blesses those faithful among the faithless found: 'Thou holdest fast my name . . . thou hast not denied my name.' Thus the first Christians lived and laboured and endured and triumphed in the Holy Name.

¶ There is a fanciful legend told concerning Ignatius which serves, nevertheless, as a parable and picture of reality. After his martyrdom, we read, his heart was cut in pieces, and the Name of Jesus was found imprinted in golden letters on every fragment. Such a legend glows and flames with the Church's devotion to the One Author and Finisher of faith.

2. There are various schools and types of Christianity — philosophic, dogmatic, sacramental. But one type at least began with the Church's beginning, and in spite of superstitions and illusions it remains the life of millions of childlike souls. It is a Christianity which is often uninstructed in doctrine, unversed in reasoning, careless about ritual, but it concentrates itself upon what may be called the idea of Jesus Christ. It is summed up in a vivid conception of His Person, an ardent devotion to Himself. We might suppose, as Mr Shorthouse has said, that such an idea would grow faint and shadowy, that such an image would fade and melt away amid the rest of time's dreams. But as a matter of practical experience

> That One Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose.

All generations of believers have proved its strange, unearthly attraction, its enduring permanence, its mighty and miraculous power. For such disciples as these, their faith is expressed in the Name of Jesus Christ, their love is centred upon the Person of Jesus Christ. In every age there are multitudes of simple-hearted folk, the aged and the little children, the humble and the heavy-laden and the poor, to whom science is dumb and Nature is dark and criticism is foolishness, who find in Jesus Christ Himself all and more than all they need. Not in empty words do such Christians testify to the sufficiency of their Saviour and the supremacy of His Name. They tell us that He is far better even than His own promises. They declare that they know Him as they cannot know their dearest earthly friends. In Him all the longings of the soul find their fruition, all losses have their compensation, all the ills and griefs of life have their antidote and their cure.

¶ Probably no friend of his who ever heard Temple Gairdner say the Name 'Jesus' in ordinary talk can forget it. He used the Name very little; it was too sacred to him and he was never a gushing talker about religion. Yet now and again something in a conversation would induce its use, and always it came out with the shy yet unconcealable note of a lover. Often he revealed himself in the playing of a hymn. 'Temple was at the organ,' a friend writes, 'and we ended up with that hymn "Jesus, my blessed Redeemer." I shall never forget the way he played it. If ever music was inspired, that was.' Nor is he forgettable in the singing of the old Derbyshire carol of the mystic forest, with its haunting divinely-infantile refrain, 'And I love my Lord Jesus above everything.' The lover glowed and shone from his whole aspect.[1]

If Jesus had not Come

Phil. ii. 9.—'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.'

WHAT would have happened if Jesus had not come into the world? There is a superficial and not uncommon way of looking at this question. It is said that, although the greatest event in history had never occurred, there is deeply embedded in the nature of things a general law of progress, and that such a law is independent of any particular event, or the contribution that any person may make to the welfare of the world. There is an underlying feeling that the world would have advanced along certain lines in any case, and that such progress is in the nature of things.

This view takes the mainspring out of all effort. It makes the part which man plays in the development of affairs a vain show. Of course, this belief sounds absurd, but we find nevertheless that in a vague way it is astonish-

[1] C. E. Padwick, *Temple Gairdner of Cairo*, 26.

ingly widespread. The notion of automatic progress is one of the many fictions which the facile optimism of the Victorian era left in its legacy. It is a philosophic caricature of the doctrine of evolution, based upon a half-knowledge of that truth. Every advance which the world has made, whether in mechanical progress or individual character or social responsibility, has had to be fought for inch by inch. The inheritance of our world to-day has not dropped into our laps as the gift of a law of progress; it has been won for us by the thought, the service, and the sacrifice of our fellows in the past. And at the spring of modern history, the watershed of most of the great movements of to-day, there is the birth, teaching, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. When we ask, If Jesus had not come? the only way in which to approach that question with any reality is to be clear as to the things which have come to mankind through Jesus, and without which the world would be infinitely poorer. As an historical figure He is separated from us by the distance of nineteen centuries. That means that as far as His earthly life is concerned He has lost Himself in history. The movements which have sprung from Him seem now to be independent of their starting-point. Much of His teaching and influence is now part of the spiritual atmosphere we breathe. A man can enter into the thought of Jesus, and be blessed by the civilization whose better aspects Jesus has made possible, with hardly a thought given to Himself. That is not to say that the coming of Jesus has made little difference; all it means is that the common ruck of mankind have a bad memory and a worse insight. We accept the world as it is as an established fact, something real and tangible, and hardly give a thought to the life-work of those who have made it what it is. Who that enjoys freedom thinks of the men who have given it to us? We take it for granted, but let us make no mistake, we are blind when we do it. That freedom is no gift of any law of progress, it is the legacy of the host of pioneers and reformers and martyrs who believed in freedom strongly enough to live and die for it.

What blind creatures men are and how glibly they talk, but we all stand on the graves of those who have given us the things which matter most of all. 'What have ye that ye did not receive?' 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.'

All this is supremely true in relation to Jesus and what He has done for mankind. It is little wonder that men forget what they owe to Him when they forget things which have happened under their very eyes.

¶ We speak of the wonderful voyage of the *Mayflower* and of what that voyage has meant to human freedom and happiness, and we do well. But do we think and speak enough of that other voyage, even more humble and obscure, the voyage of St Paul who, instead of going to Bithynia, took a little boat and in the name of the Risen Christ carried civilization into Europe? Had St Paul, or someone like St Paul, not made that journey, how different might have been the history of all Europe! How different, also, the history of America! As one looks down the long aisle of the last nineteen centuries he sees many shameful shadows. Indeed, those shadows are, in places, so deep and dark that he cannot see at all. Nevertheless, there are, here and there, flashes of glorious illumination, grand beacons that shine across the years and point the way for man's climb toward the temple of his dreams and prayers. If his vision is not impaired he will notice that within every one of these points of illumination there stands the form of the Christ of God, and as he reads anew the story of these centuries, he will notice, also, that behind and beneath every great forward movement of civilization, every upward urge of righteousness, truth and love, there has been a rediscovery of the Person and the gospel of Christ.[1]

2. Now let us look at the influence of Jesus and something of what it has meant. Suppose we take it away, what happens? No imagination can conceive it. You would have to unravel the tangled skeins of centuries, and take out all the threads which have been woven in by men and women who lived in the faith of Jesus. We may take refuge in the thought that other inspirations would have come, but we are judging things as they are, and if we take Jesus out, we take out most of what is best in the life of the last nineteen centuries. It can be said that there is little that is new in the teaching of Jesus, and that this passage and that can be matched in the literature of the

[1] H. D. M'Keehan, *The Patrimony of Life*, 134.

time before He came. It may be so, but that teaching was never brought to the pitch of passionate conviction, was never brought to bear upon the human situation, until Jesus came. He focused the best light of the past, and gave to it His own distinctive quality of radiance; and there it shines like a beam down the centuries, and we are far yet from having followed to the end the path on which that light falls.

What is the secret of that power which Jesus wields? It is the conviction in multitudes of hearts that the voice of Jesus is not merely the highest range of human truth, but that it comes with all the authority of God's word. That is the Christian conviction, and when we cease to stand on that truth we may as well close our churches, for the thing for which the Church was created will have died.

What is left if we take that away? We can no longer tell a man who is sunk in sin that there is in the Cross of Christ God's saving love for him. As we go among the lonely and the disheartened, passing blindly and hopelessly from disappointment to disappointment, we cannot tell them that in Jesus is God's assurance that there is an Eternal Care and Love over all His children. And in the home which sorrow has darkened we cannot think that the trivialities of spiritualism can supplant the great Divine promise that there are many mansions in the Father's House? It is not merely that Jesus said these things, and that if He were taken away the words would go too, but that in Him there is the right to speak, the authority behind the words. Take that away, and there is no clear word of God to men, for ultimately our faith rests on the fact that He said these things, and that He knew. Look inwards at any crisis of experience when the heart cries out for the great assurances, and we shall find that at every turn we are depending upon the truth of Jesus. In abstract discussion we may think that the truth of God would have come in some other fashion, but in life's great needs it is to Him we turn.

3. We have been thinking of the effect of the coming of Jesus in history—as One who has influenced men ever since His earthly life. But we cannot treat Jesus merely as a Person in history. It is not merely that from His words and example and death there have sprung all kinds of movements for the enrichment of life. Christ Himself has been a living Presence and Power in those movements. There have been ages when Christ seemed to be lost in ecclesiastical machinery and formal observances and complex creeds, but is it not striking that whenever men have turned back to Him religion has regained its vitality and freshness? The truth which is old flashes out new and surprising meanings and the power breaks out again. Of what other figure in history can this be said?

¶ Dr Glover puts this truth of the continued work of Christ in words that deserve remembrance: 'He is constantly enlarging our idea of God, revealing great tracts of God unsuspected by us. Here lies the explanation of the new life the Church always shows when it returns to the historical Jesus and takes Him seriously. . . . If He has not passed away He remains the concern of all who take life seriously. We shall never understand the last nineteen centuries if He and His influence are unfamiliar or unintelligible to us. We shall not have our full equipment for facing the future if so great a Force is left by us on one side. The progress of the Christian life is marked and measured at every stage by an increasing dependence on Jesus.'

Christianity stands or falls by its devotion to Jesus as the One who for all time reveals the Father—the Saviour of mankind, the Name which is above every name. As for our own faith, can we not say that it makes all the difference in the world that Jesus came?

¶ This is the testimony of Livingstone in the depths of Central Africa. He is among savages, a lonely, sick man, the only white man among blacks; he speaks frankly about the awfulness of living with them in the atmosphere of savagery and superstition, of murder and impurity. Then he jots down in his diary in Latin the verses of St Bernard's hymn—

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast,

and after it he writes, 'That hymn of St Bernard's on the name of Christ, it pleases me so; it rings in my ears as I wander in the wide, wide, wilderness. I like to dwell on the love of the great Mediator, for it always warms my heart, and I know that the Gospel is the power of God.'

Partnership with God

Phil. ii. 12, 13.—'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

St Paul exercised an extraordinary influence upon other men. He was a man of intense moral and spiritual power, and his success with the churches which he visited proved it. It is easy therefore to understand that his absence meant the removal of tension; people were strung up to do things almost beyond themselves when he was there; they slipped back into more ordinary courses when he was gone. He revealed them to themselves; showed up by his searching words their needs and dangers; made plain to them the promise and the power of Christ; and for this very reason seemed almost to be the active force in their salvation. So he thinks it necessary to remind the Philippians that salvation is a matter for themselves. They have always listened to what he had to say. But they have got to learn to do without him; they must not depend on his initiative and they could not be sure of ever seeing him again. They are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. He does not want them to suppose it too easy a matter—and it certainly is a thing which cannot be done for them—they must work it out for themselves. But they are within the range of God's good pleasure. They have been called; their minds have been enlightened to understand and follow the call. And this is not a casual move of their emotions; God works in them both to will and to carry out their will in action.

What St Paul says is full of problems, casuistical and otherwise. How can the fear and trembling which he declares to be the mental tone of those who seek salvation be made to agree with the enthusiastic joy which he attributes elsewhere to those who, like the Philippians, have accepted Christ? How can people who depend on the Grace of God be said to work out their own salvation? And, again, how can they be said to work at all, if it is God who operates in them both to will and to do, with a view to the furtherance of His own purpose? All these are matters which might give rise to controversy. In other places and in other conditions he discusses them at length. But they are never his main interest. His first view of life is always simple and direct and sane. He has not to wait to understand life until all these questions have been debated to the end. It is there before him, and he knows how to speak of it. Men toil and struggle, and they are right in thinking that it is they who labour; unless they will put forward their own efforts they will do nothing and attain nothing. Theirs is a serious task; there is no place in such work for frivolity or self-confidence. But they need not shrink from the responsibility, grave as it is. For God is working in them too.

¶ R. J. Campbell tells us that, when he was travelling in California, he was taken to see a fertile valley, beautifully cultivated, filled with the most luscious fruits and charming flowers of rich and rare hue. 'Ah,' said my guide, 'you would scarcely believe it, but what you see here is the result of only a few years' work. Less than ten years ago this was a barren wilderness, in which nothing grew but a few half-alive shrubs. It is the result of one man's activity. He saw what the soil might be made to produce, purchased the whole territory, and then at great expense brought water to it and suitable seeds, handed them over to agriculturists, portioned out the soil among them, told them his plans, then said: "Here is the seed, here is the water, there is the soil; work out my purpose."'

1. *The Divine Priority.*—'It is God which worketh in you both to will and to work.' St Paul puts this second, but in order of thought it comes first. God is always first. The Divine priority is that from which we start. We come into the world and we find God. The world itself is His creation. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the A and the Z, the First and the Last. And God works in every human life. He gives us life, implants conscience, awakens in us our feeling of dependence on a higher power. And all the while He is persuading us to goodness. He visits us with bright visions of heaven, stirs us to obedience, sends into our minds those good resolves which come to us all, and touches us with His Spirit in a hundred ways. And He does all this because He needs us. He has made us for fellowship with Himself. He has given us a share of his own being. We are His children; He is our Father, and the

Father's love seeks to bind the child closely to Himself.

In Him enfolded, gathered, comprehended,
As holds the sea her waves, He holds us all.

2. *Man's Response.*—If the impulse, the suggestion, the inspiration come from the Spirit of God, the response has to be made by ourselves. If we think of life as a process of education, we may liken God's activity in our hearts to the method of a wise teacher. A wise teacher does not seek to cram his pupil with knowledge. His object is to train the pupil's mind, to elicit his hidden powers, to enable him to educate himself. He teaches by hints, by suggestions, by laying down large principles which his learner has to apply himself. And so is character formed, and can be formed in no other way. Character is not a pattern which can be impressed on us from without. Its impression can be made only by our own efforts, by our own choice.

(1) 'Work out your own salvation.' The thing is not done in a minute or in a year. The growth of character is a slow process. And it is a process which calls for effort and self-discipline. When we think what it means to work out our own salvation, to make ourselves fit for the near Presence of God, to get rid of the impulses and desires which maintain us in separation from Him, we cannot but feel some fear and trembling; we cannot but mourn the weakness and half-heartedness of our efforts, and our endless readiness to put off any decisive action. And it is then that we begin to realize the advantage of our dependence and the assurance that it gives us of attaining our end. In the world of daily experience we are surrounded by other people, whose ideas we share, and whose standards govern us consciously or unconsciously. It is in the spiritual order that we have to face real loneliness; when we have to bring our thoughts and actions to the standard not of this or that coterie, but of a system which may reconstruct all our scale of values. We read in the Gospels that it is better to lose the whole world than our own soul; that we cannot be sure of attaining what we desire without being ready to give up all nearer objects of our interest; we have to settle for ourselves what sacrifices we ought to make, and to learn through the events of life what is really good and bad for us. It is an easy business to stifle the problem, and preach a negative asceticism. But what if we are expected to do something in the world, and to make our contribution to its movement? Mere shrinking from action will then condemn us as hopelessly as positive wickedness. We cannot avoid the difficulty; we have to settle what we ought and ought not to do. How can we face such a task without God?—with limited knowledge, and imperfect spiritual apprehension and hesitating will? That is where St Paul's unperplexed view of the circumstances helps us. We are not alone. Dependence upon God is one of the first conditions of working out our own salvation.

¶ Our first and most important religious act is the signing of dependence. We need to recognize our relation to God, to see that He is the source of all good, and that without Him we can do nothing. But we are not to be mystics, folding our hands and leaving everything to God. He has made us reasoning and voluntary beings, and when He works in us, He only puts us in more complete possession of our powers of intellect and will. Our declaration of dependence needs to be followed by a declaration of independence. We must see to it that we become co-workers with God and not mere puppets moved by the Divine fingers. The true Christian is more of a man than he ever was before, and while God works in him, he is also to work out his own salvation.

(2) And, secondly, is not this a very real danger: that to the Divine prompting we shall make only an emotional and not a volitional response? There is a stir of feeling, of emotion, but the will is not stirred to action. We do not live out in everyday life the high truth which came to us in some moment of clearer vision, on the dusty plain forgetting the inspiration of the mountain top. This is a special danger of our day. We so crowd our lives with a thousand interests that we leave ourselves little time to be quiet. But it is in the quiet hour that the will gathers force, turning into action the ideals of which we have caught a glimpse. Always in religion there is the peril of an emotionalism unrelated to conduct. But the glow fades away: we are no better than we were; nay, we are worse than we were, because we have refused to act upon the Divine voice heard or vision seen. We have to work out our own salvation; and working is not believing or sentiment.

¶ Feelings are given not merely to be enjoyed, but as motives of action. Professor James advises that we should not even listen to a concert without compelling ourselves to perform also some kind and considerate act for the sake of preserving the balance between feeling and will power. The law of life is: 'This do, and thou shalt live.' Feelings may ebb and flow, but right doing is always possible—

> We cannot kindle when we will
> The fire which in the heart resides,
> The spirit bloweth and is still,
> In mystery our soul abides;
> But tasks, in hours of insight will'd,
> May be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

(3) Once more: how often the spirit of exploration is wanting. We do not treat the life of religion as an adventure, a quest in which we are to discover as much of Divine truth as we can. Yet the hints His Spirit gives are prophecies of clearer revelation to come. If last year He showed us new glimpses of Himself, this year He can show us yet more, but only if we seek and want to find. The shining of the light on the Damascus road became to St Paul a heavenly goad urging and impelling him to prove the richness of a Saviour's love. All his life was a quest and a search, and every day brought him its assurance that his quest was not in vain. We miss so much, because we will not explore the riches of God.

We all love the children in our homes; but what constitutes the chief charm of childhood? Is it not the unfolding of faculty, the development of power? Would not any father rather a thousand times have been childless than to see in his child no growth, no development, no unfolding of the powers with the passage of the years? There is no grief that can compare with this; and shall the loving Father of our spirits know the bitter grief of bringing children to birth who shall never come to man's estate? But if this is not to be, then we must develop our spiritual capacities—we must work out our own salvation with both hands, and with fear and trembling lest the night should overtake us when no man can work.

It is God

Phil. ii. 13.—'It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

Many people feel that they have not a sufficiently vivid sense of the nearness and power of God. To them this is a matter of deep concern. They would gladly be conscious of the constraint upon their wills of some power other than their own. Their religious doubt does not arise from their lack of conviction of the existence of God, but from their lack of consciousness that God has any direct action upon their heart and life. They look around upon others and say to themselves, 'In what way am I different from those who do not fear God, except that I fear Him?' They pray that their wills may be in tune with the Infinite, but are inwardly conscious of fluctuations of desire and waywardness of purpose. They set their hands sometimes to tasks which are dictated by the love of the right and would fain believe and hope that some inflowing Divine power would come to their aid. But they can discern the incoming of no fresh strength to hasten the flow of that mingled strength and weakness they have long recognized as their own. They would like to believe with St Paul, 'It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

To such there are two simple things which may be said:

1. The first is that we should always look for God in the ordinary rather than in the extraordinary. Imaginative writers have often tried to picture primitive man looking out with fresh eyes upon the wonderful works of God, filled with a sense of awe concerning those things which to us seem to have become too familiar to attract our attention. Milton made use of this thought in *Paradise Lost*, but it is not a picture which seems true of the facts as we slowly discover them. The probability is that primitive man took the world for granted and had not his attention stimulated by those wonderful works of God which are infallible in their operation. At least this is so with primitive man as we find him to-day.

Professor Ernest Scott in *The Spirit in the New Testament* points out that men have always believed in spiritual aid, but in early days, even as the Bible reveals them to us, there was not

much ethical content in their idea of God's operation upon men. They thought that God sometimes came upon man with exceeding strength. There are many passages in the Old Testament, such as 'The spirit of the Lord came upon Samson,' or 'The spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon.' Literally it is rather, 'The spirit of the Lord *leapt* upon' such an one. The fact is that, when men did extraordinary things and were suddenly lifted above the level of their fellows, it was thought they had been possessed with a Divine spirit. Indeed not only in Bible times, but in many countries to this day, madness is considered a manifestation of spiritual power.

It is not until we come to the great prophets that we find them separating themselves from these crude notions of God's action upon man, and teaching rather that God is the guardian of the world's order, and that true inspiration lies in the perception and interpretation of the infallible order of God. It is only slowly we have come to see that the really wonderful things are the things which are always happening; and unless we can find God in the ordinary, we are restricting our hope of finding Him to a very narrow segment of life.

So we must look for God in ordinary things. We must not lose sight of the thought of God's unobtrusiveness. We talk about feeling the nearness of God. What do we mean? He is the infinite God who is everywhere. Would we have His presence so enveloping that it smothered us? We talk about the silence of God. What do we mean? Would we hear the voice of the great God, Master of the flaming heavens and the far-flung stars? Would we hear a voice that might be commensurate with His greatness —and be deafened by it? We talk about wanting to see the power of God. Would we have so great a God put forth His strength as though He exerted it to persuade us, and be crushed by it? Nay. He is very courteous and delicate in His dealings with men.

If religion only taught us to expect the irruption of God into the ordered processes of life it might well be a curse to us. It is better to see God in the sunrise than in the earthquake.

Heaven above is softer blue,
  Earth around is sweeter green:
Something lives in every hue
  Christless eyes have never seen.
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
  Flowers with brighter beauties shine,
Since I knew, as now I know,
  I am His, and He is mine.

2. The second thing is that, if we would seek God in the common things, we must not rest there. God is not the God of commonplaces, even though His commonplaces be as mysterious as the rising and the setting of the sun. Let us seek through the common things for spiritual realities. God is a Spirit. Out of Spirit everything came, back to Spirit all will eventually go. Materialism has about given up the attempt to explain the universe by merely material things. Material things cannot account for the things of the mind and the spirit. Material things are the creation of the Spirit God. He uses them as His mirrors, through which He may make clear eternal truths.

¶ There is a great piece of writing of Horace Bushnell's in which he tells the story of his own struggle with doubt. He asks himself this question: 'Is there no truth that I believe? Yes, there is a distinction of right and wrong that I have never doubted, and I see not how I can. . . . Have I taken the principle of right for my law? I have done right things, but have I ever thrown my life out on the principle to become all that it requires of me? No, I have not. Here, then, is something for me to do. Here will I begin. If there is a God, He is a right God. . . . If I have lost Him in wrong, perhaps I shall find Him in right.'

He goes on to tell us how he prayed to this God, so dimly felt and seen, asking for help that he might begin a right life, and then he says: 'As I have prayed I choose that life henceforth to be my unalterable, eternal endeavour. I rose from my knees; the whole sky was luminous about me. It was the morning of a new eternity. After this all doubt about God's reality was gone, for I had found Him. A being so profoundly felt must inevitably be!'

We should not often doubt the reality of God if we were really seeking spiritual things. Along that line the quest is wondrously satisfying. A great many of our religious difficulties arise from the fact that our plans are so often overthrown, our wishes so often thwarted. Prosperity turns to adversity, and wrong seems to triumph over right. These are the ordinary problems of the religious mind, but if it is

spiritual truth we are seeking after, if character is the great objective of our quest, these are the things that ought to happen. All the saints through all the ages would tell us that these thwartings of our purpose are the means of enrichment for our character and the ways by which we discover God.

¶ Bishop Francis Paget wrote: 'I think, as I look back over my life, that there is hardly a single thwarting of my wishes, hardly a single instance where things seemed to go against me, in which I cannot even now see that by God's profound mercy they really went for me all the while; so that if I could have looked forward only so far as the time now present I should have longed for and welcomed all those things which I have feared and grudgingly accepted. . . . There is nothing that God does not work up into His perfect plan of our lives; all lines converge, all movements tend to do His will, on earth as in heaven.' [1]

¶ He asked for strength that he might achieve; he was made weak that he might obey.

He asked for health that he might do greater things; he was given infirmity that he might do better things.

He asked for riches that he might be happy; he was given poverty that he might be wise.

He asked for power that he might have the praise of men; he was given weakness that he might feel the need of God.

He asked for all things that he might enjoy life; he was given life that he might enjoy all things.

He had received nothing that he asked for; yet all that he hoped for. His prayer is answered; he is most blessed.[2]

If we would look at life rightly, we should regard it as a spiritual thing. Whatever we take beyond the veil, it is obvious we can take nothing unless it is essentially spiritual. We cannot take our goods and chattels, we cannot take our material substance. If life has a Divine meaning at all, its ultimate meaning is a spiritual one. We are not really growing in the deepest sense unless we are becoming more and more superior to the material things, and more and more under the sway of the spiritual.

Let us go to the common things; kneel beside a common bush, look down upon a blade of grass, lift up our face in the sunlight and say, 'It is God!' The world is full of God. Then seek for the spiritual reality which indwells all these things and is their soul. Love the ordinary, but love God in the ordinary, and we will not long and not seriously doubt that 'it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

[1] *Life*, 49. [2] *The Creed of a Soldier.*

Christian Influence

Phil. ii. 14, 15.—'Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.'

When St Paul used this image of light it may be that he had in his mind that familiar, beautiful verse from Daniel: 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.' It would come easy to him to apply this image to the Christian communities that were springing up all over the Empire, and to their individual members. The world, in his gaze, lay in utter darkness, in ignorance of God's will and plan of salvation; just here and there the gloom was broken by little pin-points of light, the churches which professed the name of Christ, those groups of believers who knew what the great, self-confident world ignored, and was content to ignore—the world which in its wisdom knew not God.

Now, St Paul had not travelled far and wide by land and sea for nothing; he was under no illusion as to the disproportion between the extent of the mighty Roman world-empire and these scattered churches in Asia Minor, in Greece, in Italy; but this only served to heighten for him the contrast between that vast darkness and the tiny lamps which pierced it here and there, just as we appreciate the smallest glimmer seen through a chink or crevice on a really dark night.

> How far that little candle throws his beams!
> So shines a good deed in a naughty world,

muses Portia; and with heathendom rampant and the colossal wickedness of the Roman Cæsar assuming ever new and unheard-of

forms, the Christian churches shone the more brightly against such a background.

1. We shall make it quite clear to ourselves that the radiance with which any of us can shine is a reflected radiance, borrowed from that Lord who is pre-eminently the Light of the world, and of whose brightness we have all received. It is Jesus Christ who first kindled in us a true knowledge and love of God, and whose character revealed to us at one and the same time God's actual and man's possible. He brought whole ranges of human graces and virtues into view as they never had been brought; the race looked on Him in whom these excellences were manifested with an undreamed-of attractiveness, and has ever since set itself—with many failures, no doubt—to follow where He led and to be transformed into His Divine image.

Now, all light, whether original or derived, has only one object, one quality—and that is to shed itself abroad; it is essentially self-giving, self-diffusing, casting its rays just as far as it can. A light that is merely self-illuminating is unthinkable, a contradiction in terms. As Emerson has it: 'It is the one base thing to receive and not to give.' Just because we have received so much from Christ—nor from Him alone, for we are debtors to Greeks and barbarians—we ought by all means to give forth in turn something of what has been bestowed upon us so freely.

The one exception to that rule is the one indicated by the Evangelist in the words, 'The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not.' We may have an inner light—a sense of joyous assurance of God, an intimate happiness of our own—and simply not be able to share it with those who decline our offer. In that case there is nothing for it; we must keep our own lantern, our own enthusiasm, our own mental interests, our own faith in God, alive and alight, though perforce unshared.

¶ In Stevenson's *Lantern-Bearers* we read how certain Scottish lads used to amuse themselves on dark nights by wearing each a bull's-eye lantern buckled to the waist, and over it a buttoned top-coat.

'The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night, the slide shut, the top-coat buttoned, not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public: a mere pillar of darkness in the dark; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge.'

There are those exceptional instances, where those to whom we would gladly communicate of our light refuse our offer, perhaps ridiculing what they do not understand; in such a case we have no choice but to cherish what is ours, and keep it to ourselves, a sacred fire burning on the hidden altar of our own heart. But the exception confirms the rule, namely, that we are to be seen as lights, equally removed from ostentation and concealment. Let our model be the Lord Jesus: He meets a sufferer by the wayside, pities and straightway heals him; He is challenged by the Pharisees to perform a similar act as a 'sign,' and refuses absolutely.

2. Let us be quite certain that we are all called upon to be light-bringers, witnesses—that the responsibility lies on each of us to play his part in the great drama of life. It is no partial or nebulous theory which is going to win the world for Christ. 'The world,' as one has said, 'is not going to be won by institutions, but by lives.' No society, considered merely as such, will avail. The method of Christianity is by living, personal influence. Upon any one who professes and calls himself Christian rests the responsibility of being a centre of spiritual vitality in society. Wherever and whenever he is brought into contact with his fellow-men, then and there must his Christianity make itself felt. Everywhere is it true:

> This life involves a double life;
> Our acts and deeds have many brothers;
> The heart that makes its own delight
> Makes also a delight for others.

Nor can we isolate any part of our experience from its claim to expression. If it be there at all, it must touch the whole. No man can live a divided life, or separate his experience into compartments. In the great whirl of human activity it may appear insignificant; but it is not so.

> The smallest bark on life's tumultuous ocean
> Will leave behind a track for evermore;
> The lightest wave of influence set in motion
> Extends and widens to the eternal shore.

The sacred history and the progress of Christian principles in the world declare and illustrate

it. See it in the Bible. Samuel, with his insistence of the overrule of God over the concerns of His people, starting a principle which finds expression in the Davidic kingdom, and through it on to the ideal of Christian consecration; Elijah, with his uncompromising attitude towards idolatry, which ultimately made his people more of a Church than a nation; Isaiah, unfolding lofty principles of spiritual life, outlining a message which culminated in the gospel. These in the story of the Book of books.

See it again in the history of Christianity, and its effect upon the consciences of men. A deaf saddler and a poor printer, uplifting their voice for the negro slave till the movement they helped to start had resulted in freedom, and a step nearer to the realized brotherhood of man; a friend's word to the reeling drunkard in the street, 'John Gough, you're made for something better than this,' which started the life story of one who rescued numbers from the danger he had himself been in.

¶ Telemachus, the Asiatic monk, was born in the fourth century of the Christian era. In his Eastern home he learned about the cruel gladiatorial combats which took place in the great Colosseum at Rome though under the government of a Christian emperor. After much thought and prayer he at last resolved to go to Rome to do what he could to put an end to such a wicked pastime. So he bade farewell to the convent, walked all the way to the seashore and sailed to Italy. On the very next day after his arrival the gladiators were to fight for their lives in the amphitheatre. As the signal was about to be given to begin the combat, the brave monk leaped over the barrier into the arena and cried, 'Forbear! forbear! for the sake of the dear Lord who died for men.' There was a moment's stillness and then the frenzied roar, 'Down with the mad monk.' They stoned him to death, but soon afterwards the inhuman combats were abolished. As Gibbon has truly said in *The Decline and Fall*, 'his death was more useful than his life.'

The Christianity we profess cannot be isolated from daily experience. The movements of commerce, the complex machinery of industry, the legal application of all those conventions which bind society together, which rule in the play and interplay of social relationships, all come within the circle of our influence. Our Christianity is no dead letter, no adopted theory, no superimposed experience. It is life, and it is an influence. It must touch everything, or we are false to our profession and our belief. In the realms of industry it must bring to bear the principles of the gospel and its Founder, the justice which demands for every man his rights and from every man his duties; the comradeship which it inculcates, the consideration for the feelings of others, which is the law of love; the refusal to profit by another man's misfortune, which is the acid test of our religious profession; the readiness to put ourselves in another's place and see his point of view, which is of the essence of human understandings; above all, the recognition of the equal value in the sight of God of the souls of men; all these must find expression. In the vast movements of life the influence of even a few can effect much.

In the calmer sphere of domestic life, the sense of home, the pure heart, the upright life can stay the moral drift to frivolity or vice. Here we can all be 'lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.'

3. If this be the method of influence, what of its inspiration? The motive force that inspires it is a powerful and compelling one because the Christ is in it; it is uplifting because behind all its manifestations He moves; it conquers by love because Divine love is the spring of its being. Behind all real spiritual influence stands the figure of our Lord, the great exemplar of virtue, the hater of evil, the lover of good. He is that hidden force, 'which makes a lifetime strong.'

¶ At a critical point in the deliberations of the Westminster Assembly, when it seemed as though worldly ideas were likely to prevail, a young man, who had been observed to make notes on a piece of paper, rose to speak. It seemed a hopeless cause. But in burning words and with resistless logic he carried the Assembly with him. All desired to see the notes of so remarkable a speech. The paper contained but three words, *Da lucem Domine* (Give light, O Lord). He had sought his inspiration in his Lord, and he had won.

We stand at a critical moment in the world's history. Agelong institutions seem to be decaying, vast elemental forces are heaving and struggling, blind at times with passion, but

pathetically seeking for something better, which as yet they but faintly apprehend. Men look fearfully at the future, for Christianity seems to have lost its power. But it is just at such critical moments that there can come with burning eloquence and resistless logic an influence powerful to transform, if only men will seek it, not in institutions, not in codes, but in the Living Person of the Living Lord.

When one that holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn, where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.[1]

Epaphroditus

Phil. ii. 25, 30.—'Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier . . . for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life' (R.V.).

1. All we know of Epaphroditus is told us in this letter. He is one of those brave souls who leap into the light in connection with the imprisonment of St Paul. It has been thought that he might be identified with the Epaphras of the Colossian Epistle. But even if the names be one, such identification is improbable. It is scarcely thinkable that the pastor of Colossæ should be so associated with a Church in Europe as to be made its delegate to St Paul. It is as a delegate we hear of him. For that perilous office he had volunteered. He had undertaken to convey to St Paul the offerings of the Philippian Church. And of the risks involved in such a journey, and in visiting a suspect and a prisoner, we have sundry hints in the Apostle's words. No compulsion had driven Epaphroditus. He had taken all the hazards cheerfully. The strain of it all had told on him so terribly that he was brought down to the gates of death.

'But God had mercy on him' and on the Apostle, who would have had sorrow upon sorrow if, in addition to the burden of his imprisonment, he had been called upon to mourn the loss of his friend. When convalescing, Epaphroditus was sorely distressed and troubled because somehow the news had reached Philippi that he was ill. So at the time this letter was written he was all eagerness to get back home in order to allay their anxiety—an eagerness in which St Paul shared. Therefore at the earliest possible moment he was sent back again to Philippi, bearing this letter with him, in the course of which the Apostle exhorts the Philippians to 'receive him . . . in the Lord with all joy; and hold such in honour.'

2. All this, however, interesting as it is, gives us nothing beyond a general impression of the style of man that Epaphroditus was. It gives us no guidance as to the kind of service which he in particular rendered as a believer. But there is one word which St Paul uses of Epaphroditus which has the effect of giving us this more definite perception of the kind of man he was. Describing the illness which overtook Epaphroditus, St Paul tells the Philippians that 'for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, *hazarding his life*.' 'Hazarding his life'—there is the phrase which turns a light upon the face of Epaphroditus: 'casting his life like a die,' 'laying down as his stake *his life*.'

Epaphroditus was a man who at the great game of life put down his stake for Christ—and his stake was his life. It is a great and illuminating word—one of those words which, applied, as here, to the Christian life, subject us all to a new test. The idea is, of course, taken from the practice of gambling. A player puts money upon some chance which for reasons of his own he hopes will answer to his expectations. He takes a particular risk, and is prepared to abide by the result. The result may be against him or for him. The risk he takes is a money risk; and it may be small or great. It may be an idle throw, or it may be a throw which involves his fortune. In either case it is the staking of his money. But, taking a clue from St Paul's word here, in the stake of faith a man must lay down, not some superflous coins which he can afford to lose: he must lay down something which is so great, so personal, so bound up with his dearest life that, if it be lost, then everything is lost.

¶ The Roman soldier was an inveterate gambler, and St Paul's patience must often have been sorely tried as he had to listen to the tale of gains and losses recounted by his guard. What makes that picture of the Crucifixion in the Gospels so real is the true touch of the soldiers casting lots. One artist has cleverly sketched a helmet in their hands for throwing the dice. We feel that description is a photo-

[1] Cowper, *Charity*.

graph in words: that incident at the foot of the Cross gives reality to the scene. It is a bit of the Roman army: whatever the soldier might discard, it would not be his dice. The Latin recruit who had not seen service abroad shouted 'Venus!' when he won the toss. It was an acknowledgment of that goddess's help; but the travelled veteran affected the Greek mode. He called out 'Aphrodite!' the Greek goddess of gamblers. It was with the Foreign Legion that St Paul had largely to do, and their phrases would be dinned into his ears; so that 'Aphrodite' became a very familiar expression, and he always associated it with gambling. So in the thirtieth verse of this chapter he borrows a word from that barrack-room talk, and speaks of Epaphroditus 'hazarding his life.'[1]

3. Here, then, is a conception of faith, and of the Christian life, which it may be good for us to look at. Faith is, in one aspect of it, the taking of a risk. Faith is a venture which we make at the suggestion or invitation of Christ. And the depth of our faith is to be estimated by the extent and thoroughness of our venture. Faith is not faith until we have staked something on it so precious that we stand to be ruined if our hope should fail. If our Christianity involves only a few small coins now and then, something which takes nothing out of us, it is, quite evidently, nothing at all. We are Christian in the measure in which we stand to lose if faith in Christ is vain.

But it is easy to see how appropriately faith may be likened to a venture.

Take this whole world. What are we to make of it? What are we here for? Where are we going? Are we going anywhere? To these ultimate questions various answers can be given, and they all have reasons for themselves in the facts of existence. These answers range themselves into two companies—positive and negative, believing or denying. There is the solution that the whole thing, life, nature, history, the ups-and-downs of nations and individuals, personal sorrows, sins, repentances, duties, faith, hope, love—that all that means *God, the Soul, Immortality*.

And there is the solution that it is all 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' That life and all things are good, significant of God; or that life and all things are but a mirage, the illusion wrought by our warm human nature upon what is really the ultimate vanity and horror of things: these are the alternatives. And both are quite defensible and almost equally defensible on the mere plane of reason and argument. You call the chess-board white; I call it black. It is both; it is either. What then? This: *there is only one way of calling it if we are to play the game*. Face to face with life, with experience, with the inexhaustible world of knowledge, our arguments may well halt: whereupon the only course for a man who would preserve his saneness is to obey the profoundest instinct of his being, which is to act, to believe, and once for all commit himself to the reconciled and positive view of all things. The moment his soul is turned in that way, a man sees in front of him Jesus Christ. If he be satisfied with that Holy Companionship, he is a Christian.

'What think ye of Christ,' friend? when all's done and said,
Like you this Christianity or not?
It may be false, but will you wish it true?
Has it your vote to be so if it can?
. . . . .
What matter though I doubt at every pore,
Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers' ends,
Doubts in the trivial work of every day,
Doubts at the very bases of my soul,
In the grand moments when she probes herself—
If finally I have a life to show
The thing I did, brought out in evidence
Against the thing done to me underground
By hell and all its brood, for aught I know?[1]

Supposing that in this life of ours the evidence for the Christian view and against it were equal, *that* should be no reason for any of us hesitating. It should be the greater reason for us every one casting *ourselves* into the scale, in order to turn the balance to the side of faith. That is why the supreme test of character is just this: Does one believe? In short, is one a Christian? There is no compelling evidence; and therefore our decision in the matter is the vote we give for reasons beyond reason. Our decision to take the side of Christ is proof that, whatever may be the case with others, God has so made us that, in the words of Augustine, we cannot rest until we rest in Him.

[1] A. G. Mackinnon, *The Rome of Saint Paul*, 154.

[1] *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

The Letter and the Spirit

Phil. iii. 2, 3.—'Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.'

The question at issue between the Apostle and his opponents involved nothing less than the existence of Christianity. With the growth of the Church and the conversion of the Gentiles the controversy between Judaism and Christianity became acute and fundamental. The most solemn sign and sacrament of Judaism was circumcision. Were the Gentiles who received Christ bound to be circumcised—to submit to the outward sign of being Jews—and to observe the Jewish law? The position which the controversy holds in St Paul's Epistles shows the strength and importance of the movement. The Apostle fought against the danger with all his strength. He saw that, if the Judaizers prevailed, Christianity would shrink into a Jewish sect, that the insistence upon the necessity of the Jewish ceremonial was to overthrow spiritual religion. Hence the warning to his much loved Church at Philippi. Beware of these Christian Pharisees. Beware of dogs; beware of evil workers; beware of the concision.

1. What are the three things St Paul warns his hearers to avoid?

(1) 'Beware of dogs.'—The Apostle uses the ordinary contemptuous word which the Jews applied to all Gentiles—to all who were outside the fold of Judaism. He takes up the figure, and reverses the application. The Jew thought of the Gentile as an outcast, and, when he embraced Christianity, he carried this conception into the Christian Church, and still regarded the uncircumcised as outsiders. 'You are mistaken,' says the Apostle, 'it is you who are living on the outsides of things. You are magnifying ceremonies and ordinances and institutions—external things. It is you who are the dogs picking up the crumbs when you might be sitting down to the feast in the home.'

(2) 'Beware of evil workers.'—The expression is not quite the same as evil-doers. The thought in mind is of men who bring disaster because they are incompetent, or have mistaken notions, or are fanatical and bigoted in spirit, and so insist on the acceptance of their own ideas at whatever cost to the cause. The ruin they were in danger of effecting was not the ruin which is accomplished when pronounced enemies make open deadly assaults, but the ruin which follows betrayal or misdirected energies on the part of pretended friends. It is the ruin wrought by men who are not over scrupulous in their methods, and who substitute their own conceits for the truth. They were evil workers because they maintained that something in addition to a sincere and earnest faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was necessary to salvation. They could never fully consent to see the old actually swallowed up in the new, and the new meeting the needs of sinful human souls. These false Judaizing teachers cannot let the people rest on a simple faith in Christ, but keep disturbing them with their suggestions of the necessity of rites and ceremonies, working insidiously to bring them back to an external ceremonialism. Had they contended for an observance of the moral law, they would have been workers of good; but it was not the moral law, but the law of forms, on which they placed the emphasis.

(3) 'Beware of the concision.'—Here the Apostle uses more pointed and definite speech. With 'the concision' it was not the gospel simply, it was the gospel with the law added. It was not Christ only, it was Christ helped out by Moses. It was not baptism alone, it was baptism supplemented by circumcision. These men of 'the concision' were not opposed to the gospel and to trusting in Christ, and to the rite of baptism, but they clung to many of the forms and much of the spirit of Judaism, and they were doing their best to engraft these upon Christianity. They laid the greatest stress on circumcision, but in Paul's conception 'he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh.'

What is all this but a solemn and urgent warning against externalism, against all dependence upon outward ordinance and form? It is a powerful protest against mere religious outwardness by a man who had experienced the mighty suctions of its temptations, and who knew the compromising inclinations of the human heart. Is the protest inopportune in our own time? Is it an interesting relic of a submerged antiquity? Is there any danger

that we may come to regard a ceremony as our Father's house? May the flesh receive more emphasis than the spirit? And by the flesh the Apostle meant not merely the body and all its passions, but all that belongs to humanity apart from God. These questions are not irrelevant. It is a mistake to suppose that the evil against which St Paul fought so earnestly belongs only to the past. Pharisaism is a growth that is peculiar to no age or country. Its roots are in human nature, and it thrives in every religious soil. It is the vice against which the soul must wage perpetual conflict. Its essence consists in externalizing religion, in worshipping the letter rather than the spirit.

¶ 'On my trip to America,' says Dr E. Stanley Jones, 'I was struck by the growing grandeur of the houses of worship and the increasing ornateness of ritual and liturgy. The feeling seemed to be that the millennium lay just on the other side of an elaborate new church building, a vested choir, and stately processions. If life lay along this line, then Roman Catholicism would have it, for it makes Protestantism seem amateurish in this realm. Europe is filled with stately cathedrals and stale Christianity, with religious processions and with religious paralysis. No, this is not the way to life; and yet, feeling the emptiness within, we add to the outer, hoping that the appearance of life will make life appear. History says it does not.'

2. If these things are to be avoided what are the things to be pursued? St Paul enumerates three marks of true religion.

(1) 'Worship God in spirit.'—The first characteristic of true religion is *worship*. Not a ceremonial act, not the curbing of the flesh, not the eating of a wafer. These may be the signs and symbols of worship; they do not constitute the worship itself. Worship is in the spirit. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple?' That is a great word. If this body is a temple, what sort of service is going on within? Is the Holy Place dark and silent, or is service proceeding? We know the kind of service which was observed in Paul's temple. We have one or two little glimpses, as through an open doorway, into the nature of his daily services. Here is an instructive view: 'We give thanks without ceasing.' Not only at matins or vespers, but ceaselessly! Inside that temple the worshipping spirit told the daily tale of the Lord's mercies, and sent back a continuous thanksgiving.

¶ I challenge you to read one of the letters of the Apostle Paul without finding praise. He would stop an argument any time to sing a doxology. He is always breaking out into praise. When I was writing that sentence in my notes I remembered that that very thought came to me once in the Island of Arran, that exquisite island off the Scottish coast, full of falling rills and torrents. I remember being very much struck with the fact that you could never get out of the hearing of the sound of falling waters. If you went through a meadow there was some musical rivulet; in the dark valley was the music of some falling stream; if you climbed a slope there were the wide waters with their music, and on the hills the melody of some rippling rill—you could not get away from it.[1]

Here is another glimpse of the Apostle's temple service: 'We pray without ceasing.' Inside the temple the spirit was always on its knees. When Paul went from Mars' Hill to tent-making his spirit did not alter its posture. When the Lord Jesus passed from the temptation to the marriage in Cana of Galilee, His spirit did not change. When we pass into our places of business, our soul can retain its reverence, and even in the commonplace we can be possessed by the consciousness of the presence of God. We can hallow all the varied experiences of the common day—our home, our business, our recreations, our politics, our economics, our æsthetics; we can hallow them all by a spirit which never asserts itself in presumption or vulgarity, but which remains ever in the presence of the Eternal and Holy God.

¶ 'The holy man,' said Jacob Boehme, who made and mended shoes, 'hath his church about him everywhere, even in himself. He standeth and walketh, sitteth and lieth down, in his church.'

What else went on in the temple of the Apostle Paul? If he were a temple, who was the priest? 'He hath made us kings and priests unto God.' Then in his own temple Paul was his own priest and offered sacrifices there. The fire was never out upon the altar. What did he sacrifice? 'I am poured out upon the altar'—he offered himself as a ceaseless consecration to his

[1] J. H. Jowett.

God. These are the temple services of the Apostle Paul. Thanksgiving! Supplication! Sacrifice! This is the nature of true religion; this is 'worship in the spirit.' This is the deep, secret home-life as opposed to the uncertain life of the outsider.

(2) 'Rejoice in Christ Jesus.'—The second characteristic of true religion is *exultation*. The Jews of the circumcision had their boast and exultation. They gloried in externals, in the exclusiveness of their own peculiar caste, in distinguished lineage and high descent. They gloried in their aristocracy of culture, and in their isolation from the vulgar herd whose minds were void of the law and its traditions. They gloried in their own exclusive covenant, and in the sealing bond of circumcision. These were the boast of externalism, and over against them Paul proclaimed the glory of a true and inward religion. 'We glory in Christ Jesus.' In Him we find our crown of rejoicing—not in forms, not in ordinances, not in privileged exclusiveness, not in remote descent and in distinguished succession; we glory, directly and immediately, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

This is the boast and exultation of true spiritual religion. When anything else is exalted, the spaciousness of religious life is contracted, and the soul is imprisoned. We glory in the largeness of our spiritual liberty, in the free spaciousness of our home-life in Christ, and we will pray to be delivered from all minor gloryings which may lead us to the precarious externalism of the Judaizing Pharisees.

(3) 'We have confidence, but not in the flesh.'—The third mark of true religion is *spiritual assurance*. But where shall we gain our assurance? The Apostle answers, 'Not in the flesh.' Where, then, can our confidence be found? Only in the Christ! 'We know that our sins are forgiven us for his name's sake.' 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Our confidence is born out of our fellowship with the Lord. In our spirits we have the witness. 'God is a Spirit,' and all lasting treasure must be sought in the realm of spirit. 'They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.'

Revising our Religious Values

Phil. iii. 7.—'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.'

1. The great crisis of spirit through which St Paul had passed on his conversion to Christianity compelled him to revise his standard of values. He did not part with the old motives and ambitions as things to be set aside with lingering fond regret. He definitely cast them away as actual loss and waste. Before he saw the Lord and heard the call, he was moved by the motives that governed the men of his time; he looked to the prizes the world offered, and strove strenuously. When his eyes were opened, even the good and the better gave place to the quest for the best. 'On account of Christ,' as he expresses it, gains had become losses; not absolutely, that is, in themselves, but relatively to what he now knew and saw; his estimate of things was changed. It was not so much that the world had altered; it was that in Paul himself a change had taken place. What a man is, that he sees; and if Paul saw differently, if the world was to him a new world henceforward, it was because, under that wonderful, transforming, vivifying touch, he had himself become a new man.

What we seek depends on what we see. Men who with all their souls set out to get money see in it the chief thing: they regard gold not as a means but as an end. There is a ministry of money, beneficent and beautiful. Gold cannot buy love, but it can add comfort to the loved ones. Money is good; but the worship of gold is as pagan as the worship of the golden calf.

The disciple of Christ is compelled to revise his standard of religious values; not only the values themselves, but the standard by which he judges them. Motives, aims, and ambitions all come up for judgment at the Cross: in the light of Christ crucified there emerges a new test of life. The revelation of Christ reveals a man to himself. What we value shows what we are. There is need for the corporate body

of the Church continually to examine the things counted as gain. The first things easily slip into secondary places. It is not necessarily a conflict between good and evil: the things which Paul described as lost were not bad things. He was proud of his ancestry, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin. One may be proud of one's ancestry without committing sin. It is a great thing to be nobly born; to come of a good stock is one of the greatest advantages a man can have. The Apostle counted it a gain to be religiously orthodox: he was a Pharisee, and rejoiced in it. It is an advantage to think clearly upon matters of religion, and to see truth in concrete shape. Many minds find great help in the creeds. He was proud of his respectability; as touching the law, he was blameless. It is not a disadvantage to be moral. The things he counted as loss were good; and to them he adds the inclusive phrase, 'all things': there could be no mistake as to his choice. The struggle was between the half truth and the whole truth, the partial good and the entirely good.

God leads from the good to the better. The great message of the letter to the Hebrews is: 'God hath provided some better thing for us.' The Old Dispensation, with its codes and ceremonies, is not a blunder or an evil, but good in itself. It was superseded by something better. Judaism must give up its gains for Christ's sake. 'Yea, verily,' said that Hebrew of the Hebrews, 'and I count all things (all these things of Judaism) to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' Think how much had to go when Christianity came, what historic gains had to be lost! The temple was destroyed. Circumcision and the whole ritual of the priests ceased to be the sign and means of God's blessing. Even the Sabbath day passed into the shadow of the brighter day of the Lord, and at last disappeared altogether. And the Old Testament itself was used as quarry and foundation for the New. Providence had spent centuries in revealing and perfecting the religion of Israel; and now the same Providence lets it all pass away—prophet, priest, temple, law of Moses and all—for Christ's sake, that the universal gospel may be gained. But can we wonder that some who saw what sacred things in Christ's new day were being lost did not perceive what diviner things were being gained? Or that some in our own times, having eyes, yet see not how the Christ may change old customs for new gains of His Spirit?

¶ It is not always easy to see that in most cases of renunciation we receive something of higher value. Sometimes we never see it. For many the giving-up idea seems weak and futile, surrendering the only good we have for a phantom hope. They scoff with Tagore's Sandyp at the 'glory of bankruptcy,' as it has been called, but the reply of Nikil is nevertheless true: 'Just as desperately as the chick is infatuated about the bankruptcy of its shell. The shell is real enough, yet it is given up in exchange for intangible light and air. A sorry exchange I suppose you will call it.'[1]

¶ 'It is not only,' says Croce, 'with souls that are dear to us, but with institutions that we love, that we must be prepared to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."'

2. In normal times men are content to take life as they find it; following the line of least resistance, with the maximum of comfort, with the minimum of inconvenience. Prosperity and ease are conducive to conventional religion. If the Church is not too exacting, there may be widespread apathy, but there will be little hostility. Things are accepted as they are to avoid unpleasantness. Traditionalism appeals to intellectual indolence, and to that natural conservatism which plays a large and, on the whole, beneficent part in life. But there are periods of upheaval—the great formative, if not creative years, when everything goes into the crucible to be lost or re-minted. Then the only authority that counts is the authority of the Spirit. Conventional beliefs, however hallowed by age-long acceptance, are judged by the revised standard: they must answer the test or fall away as the dead leaves blown by the stormy winds. The disciple, in travail of soul, works through the revaluation of religious values, as Luther in his monk's cell, Calvin in his study, and Wesley at Oxford; then the truth finds a voice, and if the age is receptive a Reformation is born. It may be that the disciple is too soon, and shares the fate of the pioneer—'a voice crying in the wilderness,' or silenced in a prison. There must

[1] George Stewart, *God and Pain*, 68.

be the man and the hour. It is not given to all to say with Rupert Brooke: 'Now God be thanked who hath matched us with His hour.'

Religious values, either in beliefs or ceremonies, are discounted in the passing of the years: their growth and decay are more or less clearly defined in history. The vital thing in them is the experience between God and the human soul. There is a fundamental distinction between religion and the forms of religion. We know that St Paul said that faith, hope, and love would abide. Faith, not beliefs; beliefs often change, often have to be lost for the sake of a bigger and better belief. The growing experience of the living soul needs the progressive revelation of the Spirit. Belief must never get far away from experience. Though imperative, this revaluation of values is never quite free from risk. The life of the spirit is always an adventure.

¶ Sabatier recalls the story of the pious monk Serapion, who heard from the priest and deacon that God, in the image of Whom man had been created, was a Spirit, a Being without material body or outward form, or organs of sense. The pious Serapion having declared himself convinced by their reasoning, all present rose to give thanks to God for having saved such a holy man from the heresy of anthropomorphism. But as they prayed the old monk felt the little image of God, and was so troubled in spirit that he sobbed out: 'Woe is me, unfortunate man! They have taken away my God, and now I have no one whom I can grasp, and I know not whom I should adore and pray to.'[1]

Loss of beliefs is an experience common enough in this critical age; and it hurts us often to feel that we are losing beliefs which we know have been gains to us. We become impatient of new teaching which threatens to render them worthless. But everything depends upon the manner in which we suffer any loss of belief. If a man loses a belief, and then only a mental or moral vacuum is left in the place of it, he is indeed to be pitied; and that teacher is hardly a true friend of a man's soul who would take a belief out of a life, and put nothing truer in the place of it. Yet there is danger to faith in holding on to beliefs that God's providence is taking away for the sake of putting something better in their place. That was the mistake of the scribes, and of the Judaizers, many of them conscientious people, in St Paul's time. But if we are interested, and eager, and ready to understand and to make our own any gain which the Spirit of Truth would give men through loss, we certainly shall not become bankrupt in our creeds, nor in our beliefs grow less rich unto God.

[1] J. C. Carlile, *Vision and Vocation*, 81.

Numbers of men to-day may be said to have simplified their religion, not in the technical, narrow sense, but in the true sense. Like St Paul they have found Christ, and they have made the Redeemer the one and only Standard of religious values. Paul was not content with the good: it was not enough to refrain from this and that. The question of expediency loomed large, but there was a greater consideration. The supreme test was not whether a thing was lawful, or even true, but what was its relation to the Master. Did it lead to the Christ? Did it make the vision clearer? Did it help men to live more Christ-like lives? Did it incorporate the Lord's teaching in the law? His new standard was not a code or a creed, not a schedule or a system. Good things must give way to the quest for the best; the new gains were on a higher level; they belonged to the things of the Spirit. Christ was calling to a new way of life: He was asking for sacrifice. He offered a cross and a rough road. He did not question Paul's right to the gains he possessed; but He offered that which made them poor and mean.

In having all things, and not thee, what have I?
Not having thee, what have my labours got?
Let me enjoy but thee, what farther crave I?
And having thee alone, what have I not?
I wish nor sea, nor land; nor would I be
Possess'd of Heav'n, Heav'n unpossess'd of thee.[1]

Found in Christ

Phil. iii. 9.—'And be found in him.'

The Apostle admits us here into the very sanctuary of his being. There stand revealed to us on this page of Scripture the forces and ambitions which determined and governed his life. The impression produced on us resembles that which attends the contemplation of the

[1] Quarles, *Emblems, Divine and Moral.*

huge shafts and cylinders which drive an ocean liner through the water. What energies wrought within him! What eagerness of mind, what enthusiasm of feeling, what resoluteness of will! And all this tremendous activity was generated by the fires of a single devotion, and concentrated on a single object. If you subtract from the experience of the Apostle Paul his relationship to Jesus Christ, there is only a shell of a personality left. Christ lived in him, and he lived in Christ and for Christ.

1. It is important that we should have a clear perception of the Apostle's standpoint in this passage. Elsewhere in his writings he gives ample expression to the debt of gratitude under which he was conscious of lying to Christ. Again and again he returns to the benefits that came to him through Christ, without money and without price of his paying—the assurance of forgiveness, the sense of acceptance with God, the peace which passed all understanding, the renewing of mind, the confidence of sonship, the hope of glory. In other words, he describes how he has been affected *by* Christ. He records his experience in having received the grace of God —the wonder and joy of salvation.

But in this section of his Epistle to the Philippians he tells us how he is affected *towards* Christ. The two things go together like the sides of a coin. Both elements are present in the experience of Christian people. And there exists a direct correspondence between the one and the other. According as a man is affected *by* Christ, so will he be affected *towards* Christ. 'To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' That principle, which our Lord enunciated at the table of Simon the Pharisee, has a wider application in reference to Himself. The deeper and more varied our needs, and the richer and more appreciated the satisfactions which we receive from Him, the greater will be our gratitude to Him, and the harder will our souls follow after Him.

2. The ardent emotion of the Apostle's heart leapt out in three great flames of longing—that he might know Christ, that he might gain Christ, that he might be found in Christ.

(1) No one ever *knew* Christ more intimately than Paul did. Gifted by nature with rare powers of insight and sensibility, he had exercised them to the full on the Person of his Lord. 'Life,' as it has been well said, 'had set him at the point of view for realizing now one significant fact about Christ, now another.' Enlargement of understanding had accompanied and accrued from apostolic activity, as is always the case. But many-sided and profound as his knowledge was, there was no satisfying him. Unsearched riches in Christ inspired him with a vehement eagerness to mine away in quest of them.

(2) No one ever *gained* Christ more signally than Paul did. The privileges which he enjoyed by birth and training, and the high position he had won in Jewish religious circles by his strictness and zeal were renounced by him when he became a Christian. Ever since his conversion he had made it his aim to interpret life and duty according to the mind of Christ. The estimates he had formed of the relative value of competing interests and alternative lines of action had not been cherished by him as mere sentiments. Decisions had invariably been framed on the strength of them. They had been adopted as the working principles of his conscience. His conduct had been based on no other standards, so he had gained Christ in a most genuine and practical way, and had kept on gaining Christ to the increase of his wealth of moral experience. But to such lengths will the spirit of covetousness for the best gifts—for God's unspeakable Gift—go, that the ambition of his old age was for still larger acquisitions.

(3) No man, surely, was ever *to be found* in Christ more unmistakably than Paul was. Wherever he might chance to be—in Jerusalem or Ephesus, Antioch or Athens, Corinth or Rome; whensoever he might happen to be tested—on his tours, during a shipwreck, before his judges, in the lists of controversy; under whatever circumstances he was exposed to discovery, he was to be found in Christ. But as though this relationship to Christ had never been effected before, or were only a matter of recent date, the Apostle was moved by a great impulse of desire to have it sealed and secured beyond all question.

3. Let us consider that last aspiration of the Apostle in a little more detail.

(1) *We are able to find ourselves.*—It is quite usual in ordinary conversation for a man to say that he found himself doing or saying a certain

thing on a particular occasion. The impression which he wishes to convey is that, up to this point, his conduct had not been attended by any larger measure of thought than was required for the mere fulfilment of it. He had not been acting or speaking with deliberation and a clear recognition of what he was about. Then all of a sudden he awoke to self-consciousness. He saw himself, and heard himself, as distinctly as other people had been doing while he was absent-minded. He found himself using certain words and performing certain actions.

Now it is undoubtedly the case that this experience of self-discovery can be cultivated by each one of us. More than that, it ought to be cultivated by each one of us. If, with all our finding, we never try to find ourselves, we are neglecting by far the most important object of investigation within our compass. 'The unexamined life,' wrote Marcus Aurelius, 'is not worth living.' We ought to question ourselves periodically and faithfully concerning the sources from which the guiding ideas of our minds and the prevailing choices of our wills come. We must ascertain to whom, or to what, the character which our thinking and our conduct assume is primarily due. We must find ourselves, and find whether we are in Christ.

¶ 'Find out what you are,' writes Ruskin.[1] 'Do not think vaguely about it: take pen and paper and write down as accurate a description of yourself as you can, with the date to it. If you dare not do so, find out why you dare not, and try to get strength of heart enough to look yourself fairly in the face, in mind as well as body. I do not doubt but that the mind is a less pleasant thing to look at than the face, and for that very reason it needs more looking at.'

(2) *We are found by the events which happen within our experiences.*—There is nothing unfamiliar about that thought. During periods of anxiety, occasioned by international complications, no question is more frequently discussed than that of the state in which a hostile movement by a foreign power might possibly find the defences of this country. Persons placed in positions of responsibility, like ship-captains or engine-drivers, are constantly being commended for having shown what we describe as remarkable 'presence of mind.' Some emergency or other arose and found them ready to cope with it.

[1] *Sesame and Lilies*, Preface, ¶ 9.

In the case of every one of us, what we are and where we are is being proved daily by the things that happen to us. A problem, simple-looking enough perhaps, comes up for solution. What do we make of it? An opportunity for doing some one a good turn, or helping on a cause, is presented to us. What response does it get from us? A stroke of good fortune, as the saying is, befalls us. How do we take it? A wrong is done to us. How does it affect us? A sore disappointment comes to us. In what spirit do we receive it? The temper we display, the attitude we take up, the feelings we entertain, the ideas we cherish, the decisions we form, declare in what soil the roots of our characters are being nourished. The events of this present life, then, test us and find us. Do they find us in Christ?

¶ A Prime Minister sees human nature bared to the bone, and it was my chance to see Lord Curzon twice when he suffered great disappointment—the time when I was preferred to him as Prime Minister, and the time when I had to tell him that he could render greater service to the country as chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence than in the Foreign Office.

Each of those occasions was a profound and bitter disappointment to him, but never for one moment did he show by word, look, or innuendo, or by any reference to the subject afterwards, that he was dissatisfied. He bore no grudge, and he pursued no other course than the one I expected of him, of doing his duty where it was decided that he could best render service. I felt on both those occasions that I had seen in him, in that strange alloy which we call human nature, a vein of the purest gold.[1]

(3) *We are found by those persons with whom we come in contact.*—'How can a man be concealed?' exclaimed Confucius. By what we say and do, by what we abstain from saying and doing, by our looks and our laughter and our tears, we unmask ourselves to others. Our neighbours and our friends, those who work alongside of us and those who work for us, our colleagues and our pupils and our patients find us. Our children grow up in our homes, and there comes a day when, from a remark or a glance, we realize that they have been searching us and finding us. It is inevitable that we should be found. It implies no inquisitiveness or impertinent curiosity on the part of others

[1] Stanley Baldwin.

that they do succeed in finding us. Is it not the sincere and commanding desire of our heart that, always and by all who find us, we may be found in Christ?

¶ Bishop E. S. Woods tells this story: 'A little girl once went up to her father with a troubled face and quivering lip and said, "Father, is God dead?" He was a Christian man who had grown slack and cold; family prayers had been given up, Sunday worship was more and more infrequent. When the troubled face looked up into his with the strange question, he was surprised and said, "Why, no, little one, why do you ask such a question?" "Because you never talk to Him any more the way you used to do."'

'In Christ.' The relation so expressed is too wonderful ever to be described adequately. But the possibility of it, the reality of it, will never be gainsaid by those who have experience of it. It is an ultimate fact of the Christian life. We are made to correlate with Jesus Christ, and He with us. To keep our union with Him in repair, to renew and strengthen it, is the object of our worship. We would be hidden more deeply in Him, that, when found, we may be found in Him—undetachable from the Rock of Ages, as the single stone embedded in the granite boulder is inseparable from the parent mass. We would have our lives and characters inexplicable—not in the sense of being ambiguous, inconsistent, veering between Yea and Nay—but inexplicable in the sense of being incapable of explanation apart from Jesus Christ.

The Power of His Resurrection

Phil. iii. 10.—'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.'

1. It was the risen Christ who had appeared to St Paul; the ascended, glorified Lord. It was the risen Christ he desired to know. Other apostles had seen the wonders of His earthly life, but this was history to the Apostle, as it is to us. There is no word of regret in all his Epistles that he had not walked with Him in Galilee, or listened to His inspiring words, or stood beneath His cross. Christ as He is—this is his search and his study: 'that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' Christ in himself, and himself in Christ: this is more than Christ at his side, or Christ crucified before his eyes. Not a memory, but a life, is what he craves for: not a pattern, but a power. To have the risen Christ in him, to know that He is there, to know what He is doing there—that is to 'know him, and the power of his resurrection.' It was not the historical fact of the physical resurrection of Christ that he desired to be convinced of, although of that fact he had no shadow of doubt. To accept a historical fact when it is proved to you is not faith, nor is it knowledge, in the religious sense of those words. Faith is concerned with the unseen: and to have seen a person is not the same as to know him.

Probably no human testimony would have convinced Saul of Tarsus that Jesus of Nazareth had truly risen from the dead. And, if he had been convinced of the fact, we cannot say that it would have changed his attitude of hostility. But, to use his own words, 'it pleased God to reveal his son in me.' It was no mere external appearance: the risen, living Christ had laid hold of him and possessed him; His touch had reached into his inmost being.

From that moment all the testimony that others offered fitted in with what he knew of Christ. He delighted to collect it and weld it into an impregnable argument, to meet the questionings of the Greeks of Corinth who were puzzling over the possibility of any resurrection and the nature of resurrection bodies. But his faith rested not on testimonies. He was permeated with the living Presence of Christ: he had taken Him as the Master of his life—'Christ Jesus my Lord': his whole life had been changed as the result: he carried the witness in himself. Yet he seems to speak as if it were still his goal, not his attainment—to 'know him, and the power of his resurrection'—'if by any means I may attain.'

2. The power of the resurrection is no far-off promise, but a present gift. The anticipations of the future are in the New Testament quite subordinate to the assurance that eternal life is, after all, not primarily a hope to be cherished for the future, but an acquisition to be attained in this present life. The time to enter eternity is now. Immortality is not a matter of duration, but a matter of vitality; not a physical transition, but a moral awakening; not a matter of quantity, but a matter of quality.

'This is life eternal,' says the gospel, 'that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' 'To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life'; 'We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren'; such are the promises and warnings which mark the New Testament teaching.

¶ Dr Percy Gardner put it aptly, Christ speaks of Eternal Life not in the present or the future, but 'the mystic tense.' People can live it here and now. 'If you would enter into life,' said Christ to that youth to whom His heart went forth, 'keep the commandments.'

¶ As at the Renaissance men's minds were entirely changed by the astronomical discovery that the earth is not alone, with the heavens revolving far above it, but that it is in heaven, a part of it, so in the Testament men found that Time is an illusion and that this that we know now is a part of Eternity. And grasping that, they learned to live their life in a new way, the heavenly, the eternal way.[1]

We have a wholly different way of approach to the problem of immortality from that which engages speculative minds in their guesses about the future. It is a way which starts, not from anticipation, but from experience; not with Christ risen in one's creed, but with Christ risen in one's life; not with immortality as a future gift, but with immortality as a present acquisition. In short, the sublime but dimly recognized teaching of the New Testament is this, that the spiritual order of this world is set over against the sensuous order as a literal contrast between life and death. One may fancy himself, that is to say, alive and well, in the fullness of physical health, and yet, according to this teaching, he may be sick, even unto death. 'This my son,' said the father of the prodigal, not in a figure of speech but in literal truth, 'was dead and is alive again.' Eternal life, in other words, is not a matter of creed but a matter of character.

It must be admitted that something of a wrench of mind is necessary to turn from the thought of immortality as a cosmic problem to the thought of immortality as a way of life. It is exhilarating to look back across the centuries and sing, 'Christ is risen'; but it strikes a much less jubilant note to ask, 'Am I risen with Christ? Have I attained unto the resurrection?' Yet this is in fact the question of importance, and this personal and momentous transition is not so strange or remote as it at first may appear.

A young man, for example, is unawakened in his intellectual life. He is threatened with mental atrophy and decline. It would be an exaggeration to say that his mind is alive. He may be robust in body, and athletic in habit, but, according to the New Testament, he is intellectually but half alive. Then, by the great grace of God, there comes some day of persuasion, a contagion, an access of vitality. A teacher, a book, an upleaping desire wakes him and shakes him; and his mind springs to life, catches fire, is clarified in its purpose, and lays hold of that which has laid hold of him. Then the intellectual life of that youth is born. He has made the greatest possible discovery, the discovery of himself. What is this process of self-discovery but an intellectual resurrection?

¶ Emily Dickinson was thinking of such an experience when she wrote:

> He ate and drank the precious words,
> His spirit grew robust;
> He knew no more that he was poor,
> Nor that his frame was dust.
> He danced along the dingy days,
> And this bequest of wings
> Was but a book. What liberty
> A loosened spirit brings.

The same resurrection of vitality may take more dramatic forms, and the new life be a moral rather than an intellectual transition. A young man's will wanders away into some far country of desire. He sets himself, as he says, to 'see life,' when he is in fact seeing death. Then, by some revolution of the will, or searching of soul, or summons of duty, or persuasion of love, he comes 'to himself.' It is a literal resurrection, and as he thus comes to himself he says, 'I will arise and go to my father.' He has felt the power of the resurrection. He has laid hold of life because it has laid hold of him.

3. From the discovery of the meaning of life there follow two consequences of the most momentous and immediate importance.

(1) The recognition of eternal life as now and here opens the straight road to assurance of its continuity and perpetuation. One rational conviction sustains and directs our faith. It is

[1] A. J. Gossip.

the assurance that, as Emerson summarized it, 'What is excellent, as God lives, is permanent'; that a life which is not of the body is not involved in the fate of the body; that those who have attained to the resurrection here are the best witnesses of its continuity hereafter. In other words, the most convincing reason for one's faith in immortality comes of acquaintance with lives which do not seem likely to die. 'Death,' it was said of Jesus, 'had no dominion over him.' The life of the Master had become in the mind of His followers so completely dissociated from the changes of the body that its continuance was the result of its character. As His word in the flesh had been with power, so, when that word was silenced, they lived by the power of His resurrection. Eternal life as a problem had been answered for them by eternal life as a fact. And that, ever since, has been the convincing demonstration of the survival of the human soul. Through some experience of affection or reminiscence one has had intimacy with lives which had in them the quality of timelessness.

¶ Thomas Arnold of Rugby is a case in point. He constrained his gifted son Matthew to believe that his father could not die. That son visited his father's tomb in Rugby chapel, and knew *he was not there*. In memorable lines he thus apostrophized that father:

> O strong soul, by what shore
> Tarriest thou now? For that force,
> Surely, has not been left vain!
> Somewhere, surely, afar,
> In the sounding labour-house vast
> Of being, is practised that strength,
> Zealous, beneficent, firm!
>
> Yes, in some far shining sphere,
> Conscious or not of the past,
> Still thou performest the word
> Of the spirit in whom thou dost live—
> Prompt, unwearied, as here!
> Still thou upraisest with zeal
> The humble good from the ground,
> Sternly repressest the bad!
> Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
> Those who with half-open eyes
> Tread the border-land dim
> 'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
> Succourest!—this was thy work,
> This was thy life upon earth.

(2) If the best evidence of eternal life is knowledge of it as a fact; if, as we know what love is by loving, and what sight is by seeing, so we know what immortality is by seeing and loving a soul that is immortal—then there follows a second consequence which is not less reassuring. For this kind of life, resurrection, not yet wholly attained but already laid hold of, is what makes eternal life in the future not only real but worth the having. When one contemplates a future life which is sheer duration, it is by no means certain whether it should be anticipated with hope or with fear. Immortality as duration, with all its perplexing problems of sin and its penalty, of punishment and retribution, has not much to recommend it to tired mortals; and there is nothing in it of the New Testament note of vitality and power. But immortality as opportunity, eternal life to be first attained and then maintained—that transfers one to a wholly different view.

To believe that the purposes and desires which have so often been unfulfilled may have their chance of realization; to believe that the blunders and follies which cloud one's memory may be somehow, even if it be with suffering, redeemed; to believe that the shining witnesses of the spirit which have sustained one's courage in this life are gathered into the timeless service of a loving God—this is to reach at last the New Testament way of approach to the mystery of the future. Not all at once is this assurance to be attained among the perplexities and discords of ordinary life. The things which are seen seem real, and the things which are not seen seem visionary. But by the teachings of experience, by companionship with lives unspotted from the world, by the dedication of our own life to the discipleship of Christ our Lord—the proportions of truth grow clearer, and reality emerges from illusion, and the sense of timelessness supplants the sense of temporariness.

> All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good
> shall exist;
> Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor
> good, nor power
> Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives
> for the melodist
> When eternity affirms the conception of an
> hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by-and-by.[1]

The Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings

Phil. iii. 10.—'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death' (R.V.).

1. *The Knowledge of Experience.*—'That I may know him.' What the Apostle desired was not knowledge about Christ; he wanted to know Him in a direct, immediate, and personal way. He wanted not simply to 'know but to recognize and feel and appropriate,' says Bishop Lightfoot. He wanted to know Christ, not in the sense of intellectual apprehension, but in the sense of practical experience. There is all the difference in the world between knowing a person and knowing about him. We know about numbers of people whom we do not really know at all. Every public man lives more or less in the limelight. Thousands and tens of thousands are acquainted with the appearance of our leading statesmen, for instance, who have never set eyes on the men themselves. They know all about their opinions and policies and characters. But there is all the difference in the world between the knowledge of the man in the street, and the knowledge of those who live within the circle of the family and the home.

It was this immediate and personal knowledge that Paul coveted above everything else. He did not want to know Christ after the flesh simply. He was not content with knowing the facts about Jesus. It is quite possible that he knew most of them before he became a Christian. But there was no saving quality in external knowledge of that kind. What Paul desired was, not to know Christ as a Figure on the page of history, but to know Him as a Christ in his own soul.

And it is still this knowledge of Christ that saves—the knowledge of personal experience. This is not to minimize the importance of the historic. It is through the study of the facts about Christ that we gain the personal and experimental knowledge which is the one thing needful. We read the gospel story, and become aware that we are dealing, not with some one who lived and died nineteen centuries ago, but with a living Person actually in touch now with our spirits. Still it remains true that historical knowledge is one thing and experimental knowledge is quite another. It is probably true to say that all our people have some rudimentary knowledge of the external facts of Christ's life. But without any breach of charity it may be said that vast multitudes of them remain unregenerate in spite of it. The fact is, men and women cannot be redeemed and restored by a figure of the dim past, but only by a Living Presence and Power.

¶ 'On Sunday evening, my last day in Mengo, while standing on the Hill of Peace, and taking a long last look at the wonderful landscape, I said to a young man passing, "Are you a Christian?" He paused, saluted, and must have misunderstood my meaning, for he replied "No." Then he dropped his head and thought for a moment, and looked up and said: "Christ?" I answered: "Yes." His countenance bore a solemn aspect as if in deep study of a most serious problem, when he replied: "I know Him."

'This led to some more meditation on my part, for here lies involved the whole story of Christian missions in the kingdom of Uganda. How came he to be acquainted with the One whom he calls Christ? He must have been introduced by some one knowing both the dark lad and the Master. . . . It is certainly a tremendous statement made at sunset on the Hill of Peace.'[1]

2. *A Progressive Experience.*—'That I may know him.' The Apostle speaks as if this knowledge he desires were still a future experience. But did not Paul at the very time he wrote this letter know Christ in a direct and experimental way? Yes, he did. He had known Christ in that way for years. That was what happened on the way to Damascus: his knowledge of the facts about Jesus changed to an experimental knowledge of Christ Himself. And the experience was by no means confined to that great and critical occasion. It was continuous. 'I

[1] Browning, *Abt Vogler*.

[1] W. E. Geil, *A Yankee in Pigmy Land*.

live,' he declares in one place, 'yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' And yet here he speaks as if this experimental knowledge of Christ were a boon still to be gained. The fact is, this experimental knowledge of Christ is always progressive. 'In him are all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom hidden.' We say sometimes about our human friends, 'I know so-and-so through and through.' But nobody knows Christ through and through. There are heights of knowledge, and great breadths of wisdom, and vast depths of love which the best of men have never explored. John declared that if all the things which Jesus did were written down all the world would not contain the books that should be written. And the same sense of the limitlessness of Christ breathes through an aspiration like this. Throughout all the years of life and throughout all eternity, Paul, with all saints, would be following on to know the Lord, seeking to comprehend what is the length and breadth, what is the height and depth, of that love which passeth knowledge.

¶ In his early days, Burne-Jones came under the inspiration of Rossetti. He worshipped him as his ideal, strove earnestly to excel, and to follow in his master's footsteps. At length, with fear and trembling, he took his drawings to Rossetti, who looked at them long and carefully, and at last said, 'You have nothing more to learn of me.'

But Paul, following his Master throughout his life, was forced to say, 'Not as though I had already attained.' [1]

¶ Columbus discovered America; but what did he know about its great lakes, rivers, forests, and the Mississippi valley? He died without knowing much about what he had discovered. So, many of us have discovered something of the love of God; but there are heights, depths, and lengths of it we do not know. That Love is a great ocean; and we require to plunge into it before we really know anything of it.[2]

It passeth knowledge, that dear love of Thine,
My Saviour, Jesus! yet this soul of mine
Would of Thy love, in all its breadth and length,
Its height and depth, its everlasting strength,
Know more and more.[3]

The experimental knowledge of Christ, then, is a progressive knowledge. And in the text certain stages in the progress are indicated. 'That I may know him,' says the Apostle, 'and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death.' The arrangement of the Apostolic phrases sets forth the invariable order of spiritual experience. The first thing we know about Christ is the power of His resurrection. Then, as we make more and more room for Him, we begin to become partners in His sufferings, until at length we become so completely and entirely Christian that we are ready to share in His death.

3. *The Fellowship of Suffering.*—While the experience of the power of Christ's resurrection is the beginning of our knowledge of Christ and the start of our Christian life, it certainly is not the end. The Christian life is not simply something done for us and given to us by Christ, it is something also which we give to, and do with, Him. It begins to dawn upon the man who has felt the power of Christ's resurrection that there is a deeper and more sacred and more intimate experience into which he may enter—he may share in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

'The fellowship of'—the having in common—'His sufferings'! In what way can the sufferings of our Lord be common to us and be shared by us? Of course, into our Lord's atoning sacrifice we may not enter. But there are certain aspects of our Lord's sorrows which we *may* share. In fact, we only really become Christians as we do share in them.

(1) There is the suffering Christ endured *on account of sin*. He bore the burden of it on His soul. He was moved to the depths of His soul for the victims and slaves of it. 'When he beheld the city, he wept over it'—over its indifference, irreligion, wickedness and impending doom. And we simply do not know Christ unless we enter into the fellowship of His suffering in this respect, unless we feel the sin and shame of the world as a burden on our own souls. 'I could wish myself accursed for my brethren according to the flesh,' said St Paul. The sin and rebellion of the Jews burdened and haunted him. 'Who is weak,' he cries in another place, 'and I am not weak?' He suffered, as Christ suffered, at the thought of the wandering, ignorant, sinning millions of the world. We are quick to sympathize with physical suffering and loss. But what

[1] J. Burns. [2] D. L. Moody. [3] Mary Shekleton.

about the multitudes who are losing their souls?

Of the poor bird that cannot fly
Kindly you think and mournfully;
For prisoners and for exiles all
You let the tears of pity fall;
And very true the grief should be
That mourns the bondage of the free.

The soul—*she* has a fatherland;
Binds *her* not many a tyrant's hand?
And the winged spirit has a home,
But can she always homeward come?
Poor souls, with all their wounds and foes,
Will you not also pity those? [1]

(2) What else can we share, if our Saviour and we are to have 'all things in common'? We cannot be long with the Lord without noting how deeply He suffered *with the sufferings of others*. Other folk's sorrows He made His own, and He drank deeply of everybody's bitter cup. Have we entered into the fellowship of those sufferings? Someone may possibly reply, 'I've got enough of my own!' So we have; but, if we made other people's sorrows our own as well, the miracle would happen which has been wrought in innumerable lives, the double load would be more tolerable than either of the single loads, and the burden would become light. At any rate, when we add the fire of another man's suffering to our own, there is One in the fire 'like unto the Son of Man,' and in that strong controlling Presence 'the fire shall not kindle upon thee to destroy.' And at any rate, again, when we sorrow with another's sorrow we are drinking the cup of the Lord, and we enter into 'the fellowship of his sufferings.'

¶ When those premonitory symptoms occurred which periodically threatened mental darkness to Mary Lamb, she and her brother, Charles Lamb, would go in the early morning, or in the late night, speechless and weeping, over the desolate way that led to the asylum. They said nothing to each other, they just walked the gloomy way, hand in hand.

(3) And, again, we can enter into the fellowship of our Lord's sufferings by the complete surrender of ourselves to *the service of our fellow-men*. Our Lord served other people to the point of physical weakness and exhaustion, and even unto death. Our service too frequently ends where suffering begins. We stop short of the promise of fertility. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.' 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood!' And it is just at that point of resistance that we begin to win. Our work begins to tell when the workman is content to suffer. But is it not true that for many of us our service ends just when we reach the bitter cup? 'Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink of?' No, we are not able, and when our work and service become bitter we give them up. 'From that day'—Calvary in sight—'many of his disciples turned back, and walked no more with him.'

¶ In the later days of the war, when America had only just come into the conflict, there were grave difficulties of transport. Only a limited number of American troops could cross the Atlantic. There was a certain company from which a draft was to be taken. Every man in the company was keen to go, but only a few could be taken. Who should the few be? They decided to cast lots. A number of papers were put into a hat, just as many as there were men, and crosses were put on some of the papers, and every man who drew a cross was to go to France. One boy wrote to his father, and this line was in the letter, 'If ever I prayed in my life I prayed to-day that I might draw a cross.' [1]

¶ One word from old Samuel Rutherford, from a letter he wrote to John Kennedy: 'Ye contracted with Christ, I hope, when first ye began to follow Him, that ye would bear His cross. Fulfil your part of the contract with patience, and break not to Jesus Christ. . . . Be honest, brother, in your bargaining with Him. . . . Forward, brother, and lose not your grips. . . . In the strength of Jesus, despatch your business!'

The Grasp of Christ

Phil. iii. 12.—'I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus' (R.V.).

THE primary meaning of the word 'apprehend' is 'to seize, to lay hold of,' and, no doubt, in the days of King James that primary meaning

[1] George Macdonald.

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Life in the Heights*, 166.

was the dominant meaning. But a change has come over the use of the word. Except in the case of the arrest of a prisoner, the word nowadays scarcely ever refers to a physical seizure. It has come to have the specialized meaning of 'seizing with the mind,' 'understanding.' In its current, ordinary use, the word stands for an intellectual process. But the Greek word which it represents in this passage refers not to an intellectual process, but to a physical act. It is the primary, not the secondary, sense of 'apprehend' that we want if we are to get the Apostle's meaning. The Twentieth Century Testament translates: 'I press on in the hope of actually laying hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.' That is undoubtedly the Apostle's meaning. Let us put it even more tersely: 'I press on, striving to grasp that for which also I was grasped by Christ.'

When we look at the sentence we see that there are two actions referred to in it. First of all, there is an action on the part of Christ—the Lord 'grasped' Paul. And, secondly, there is an action on the part of the Apostle—he had been trying to 'grasp' that for which Christ had grasped him. That double 'grasp' is still the condition of the Christian life. In it both Christ and man have to play their part.

¶ On Dora Greenwell's books there is engraven on the title-page a hand grasping a cross, and encircling it this motto: *Et teneo et teneor*—'I both hold and am held.'

1. *Christ's Grasp of Paul.*—'I was grasped,' says the Apostle, 'by Christ Jesus.' The tense of the verb makes it clear that he is thinking of a definite historic event; and what he has in his mind is that staggering event which took place one noon-day outside the walls of Damascus. That was what really happened on that memorable day—Paul was 'grasped' by Christ. The word exactly describes the change—the sudden and startling change—that took place in the case of the arch-persecutor. He left Jerusalem as the emissary of the high priests; he entered Damascus as a humble believer in Christ. The change was so startling, so sudden, so complete, that people could scarcely convince themselves it was true. Paul was a man arrested in mid-career. It was as if some mighty hand had been placed upon him which changed the entire current of his life. Jesus Christ had revealed Himself to be the living and exalted Son of God.

Whether our religious life begins with a great and sudden convulsion of the soul, or whether it is the result of quiet processes of growth, the real start of religion comes when the Christ, about whom we have heard a thousand times, presents Himself real and living to the soul and lays hold upon us. The initiative is on His part, not on ours. It is not so much a case of our 'seeking' Christ, as of His 'seeking' us. By the preaching of the Word, by the influence of home, by the persuasions of life, by joy, by sorrow, by loss, by death, Christ seeks to lay hold of, to come into actual and living touch with, this soul and that. And religion really begins when the Lord succeeds in making Himself felt, known, and realized by us.

2. *The Purpose of Christ's Grasp.*—'I press on, striving to grasp *that for which also I was grasped by Christ.*' It seems that Christ had a definite purpose in view when He laid hold of Paul. Conversion is always purposeful. The very word suggests as much as that. Scientists talk about the 'transformation of energy.' That is exactly what conversion is. It is a transformation of energy. When a man lives for the world and self and sin, he is applying his energies—his affections, his emotions, his manifold powers—in wrong directions. He is misapplying them, misusing them. When Christ 'grasps' a man it is with the definite object of turning those energies into their true channels; not of suppressing them, but of transforming them. Christ knew that the flaming zeal, which made Paul the most furious of persecutors, turned into its right channel, would make him the prince of missionaries.

¶ At Dunkeld there is a great bastion of rock, whose summit is crowned with pines that show like lances on the skyline. Here and there is an outcropping of bare rock which shows how steep and craggy the bluff is. Once it was quite bare of trees, and no man could scale the precipice to plant seeds on the summit. But one of the Dukes of Atholl had a passion for planting trees, and one day Alexander Nasmyth, the father of the great engineer, was visiting the grounds and heard of the Duke's baulked desire. In front of the castle was an old cannon that was kept for firing salutes on great occasions. Nasmyth removed the cannon

to a strategic point opposite the rock. He filled the round tin canister with pine and fir seeds and rammed it into the cannon with a charge of gunpowder. Then he fired it at the rock, the canister being smashed and the seeds scattered. It was in this way that the barren crag was made a coppice. The old cannon that had made many a pleasance a wilderness was now commandeered for the reverse process.[1]

But that is only part of the truth. Christ's purpose was wider and richer than that. If we read Paul's spiritual history aright, we gather that he was a man with a torn and distracted heart, hungering for peace but looking for it in the wrong place. We gather further that, while from the Pharisaic point of view he was a very devout and religious man, his conception of religion was more mechanical than spiritual, and that he laid the emphasis on the observance of the Law rather than on the believing and loving heart. And when Christ laid hold of him it was to set him right on these points as well as to turn his energy and zeal into Christian channels.

(1) Christ 'grasped' Paul in order to bring him *peace of heart*. From the time he had come to years of discretion he had carried within his breast a divided and distracted heart. How divided and distracted it was we can discern for ourselves by reading that tragic and tremendous seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. What harassed and tortured Paul was his sense of sin. He tried to gain 'righteousness,' that is to say, he tried so to live as to be able to challenge God and demand before heaven's throne a certificate of 'Not Guilty,' because he had given to the Law a perfect obedience. But the more he tried, the more he failed. The Jews talked of him as a 'blameless' person; but Paul knew the secrets of his own heart. He had been trying to set himself right with God on the score of his own merits. But Christ showed him a more excellent way. He revealed to him the infinite love and grace of God, bearing in the Cross of His Son the pain and punishment of sin. He bade Paul trust that amazing grace; and Paul did so, with the result that sin lost its power to plague him, and the peace of God garrisoned his heart.

This is the great evangelical experience. Christ 'grasped' Martin Luther, done almost to death with fasts and penances which brought his soul no peace, with that great word, 'The just shall live by faith,' and Luther straightway entered into a life of triumphant and happy trust. Christ 'grasped' John Bunyan, driven almost to distraction by a sense of his own failure and shortcoming, with that word, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' and the crushing burden rolled away. It is no use trying to ignore or minimize sin. And, do what we will, we cannot get rid of it by any good deeds of our own. There is only one way of getting rid of it, and that is by the mercy and grace of God.

> There is one only Way
> From death to life for me:
> It is by Thee, O Crucified!
> I, also, in Thy death have died,
> And, since Thou livest, live in Thee,
> Who art the living Way.
>
> There is one only Way
> Of righteousness for me:
> O Jesus, risen—living now—
> My only righteousness art Thou!
> I draw my life and strength from Thee,
> Who art the living Way.[1]

(2) Christ 'grasped' Paul *in order to make a saint of him*. Not simply to bring him peace of heart, but to make a new man of him in Christ Jesus. Paul was a Pharisee, and the Pharisees constituted the pious party of Palestine. But there is all the difference in the world between the Pharisee and the saint. The Pharisee lives in the region of the mechanical and the external; the saint has his home in God. The Pharisee is known by his scrupulous observance of rite and ceremony; the saint is recognized by his loving and obedient heart. And that was what Christ did for Paul—He turned this Pharisee into a saint. There is a little phrase which is eminently characteristic of the Apostle Paul—the phrase 'in Christ.' That was what life became for Paul after the great event of Damascus, it became a life 'in Christ.' Christ took such entire possession of the Apostle's mind and heart that he could say, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

So Christ turns men from sin to sainthood. He laid hold of Zacchæus, not simply to blot

[1] Kennedy Williamson, *The Uncarven Timbers*, 199.

[1] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 154.

out the record of his oppressions and injustices, but to make a philanthropist of him. He laid hold of Augustine, not simply to bring him forgiveness for his early profligacy, but to make a mighty preacher and teacher of him. He lays hold of men, not simply in order to forgive them, but in order to give them a new character.

(3) Christ 'grasped' Paul *in order to make a missionary of him.* The Latins had a proverb to this effect: 'Corruptio optimi pessima.' 'The best things when perverted become the worst things.' And the proverb is profoundly true. The greater and nobler a man's abilities, the more mischief he can do if his abilities are turned to wrong ends. This was exactly the case with Paul. He was a man of great gifts. But he was doing endless harm because he was putting them to false uses. Christ 'grasped' him in order to divert those great abilities of his into the right channels. Christ appointed him his sphere and his business. He laid hold of him to make a missionary of him, a missionary who had the world for his parish. And that is why Christ still seeks men—to send them forth to serve others, to be evangelists and missionaries, to be pioneers and soldiers of His Kingdom. We are saved to serve. We are redeemed, not for our own happiness only, but for the benefit and blessing of the whole world.

¶ Mrs Howard Taylor has told of a girl who, when she was asked why she had devoted herself to missionary work in China, replied: 'I seemed to see the Lord Jesus Christ standing alone among the heathen—dumb. No one to speak for Him; no one through whose life He could pour the love of His heart; waiting for you and me to come to His side and be lips for Him, and love for Him, and win those waiting souls to Him.'

3. *Paul's Answering Grasp.*—Christ laid hold on Paul for a certain definite purpose; but Christ's grasp would have been in vain if Paul's grasp had not answered His. Paul strove to make actual the ideals Christ cherished for him; he appropriated to himself the forgiveness proffered to him; he made it the one business of his life to attain the saintly character; he carried out his missionary work with the determination to know nothing among men, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

And this is the condition of great and worthy Christian living still. Christ has laid hold of us for purposes of *forgiveness* and *character* and *service.* But too often we lay hold of His great purposes with only a partial grasp. For instance, we take to ourselves the assurance of pardon and peace. But what about the saintly character? Do we honestly make it our business to make room for Christ in our hearts and lives? Is that our aim—to bring every part of our life into subjection to the law of Christ? And then what about the missionary service? Christ 'laid hold' of us because He wanted us to be His witnesses. It does not necessarily mean that we should go out to China or India or the South Seas; but every Christian is called to be an evangelist. The sphere may be within the walls of our own home. 'Go home and tell thy friends what great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he hath had mercy on thee.' We have been called that we might be sent. Have we made this purpose of Christ our own? There is no reason why we should not become Christians like Paul; and with a Church composed of Christians like Paul we should not have to wait long for a changed world.

¶ It is impossible to measure what might be done by a few men who, catching a vision of a world evangelized, yield themselves wholly to God, to be used by Him to realize the vision.[1]

The Single Aim

Phil. iii. 13.—'One thing I do.'

THE text, not long in the English, is shorter still in the original, where two words of two letters each make an epigram which has been the motto of every successful life in history. One thing—no limping between two opinions, no good-natured open-mindedness which leaves convictions to strenuous souls who do not understand how to say 'Yes' and 'No' in the same breath. One thing—no frittering away of life's energies on a dozen objects, all, perhaps, good in themselves, but all of them demanding the first place in the interest of those who would pursue them with success.

¶ Concentration is the secret of strength in politics, in war, in trade, and in all management of human affairs. The one evil of life is dissipation; its one prudence is concentration.[2]

[1] J. R. Mott. [2] Emerson, *Conduct of Life.*

¶ Gibbon[1] says in his account of the Emperor Gallienus: 'He was a master of several curious but useless sciences, a ready orator, an elegant poet, a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and most contemptible prince.'

1. 'One thing I do' is the principle that produces success in so preponderant a proportion of cases that we may fairly set it down as a universal rule. Yes, but what is success when it is attained? The little child achieves success when he masters the art of spinning his top. John Couch Adams achieved success when he traced to its hiding-place among the stars the distant planet Neptune. Between these two successes there lies a whole world of varying achievements, great and small, not often renowned among men, according to the true scale of greatness. The success of selfish scoundrels who pile up their millions by ruthlessly 'cornering' the livelihood of the masses—such a success may be as truly built on the maxim of our text as the success of the man who first brought to Europe the gospel message of God's love to men. The maxim is therefore neutral, unmoral, a mere formula which governs the accomplishment of any object, good or bad, which a man may set himself to gain. So everything turns on the object which is aimed at by this strenuous concentration of effort.

What is the one thing we are to do, if we are to make the very most of our life? We are all of us necessarily specializing in some way or other, under the operation of that beneficent law which ordains that, if a man will not work, neither ought he to eat. And he who at the last is to present himself before the Perfect Intelligence as a workman needing not to be ashamed must see to it that, whatever his hands find to do, he does with all his might. God will accept failures which a human master could only reject, when He knows that the man's utmost effort has been put into them. But it is worse than useless for any of us to present shoddy work to Him. 'One thing I do' must be our motto when we are engaged on the humblest of duties, that our great Taskmaster's eye may ever behold that whole-hearted endeavour which is the utmost that He demands from men. But all this belongs to the labour which is a means and not an end, and when we come to regard it or its fruits as an end in itself we have turned our backs on the one thing which it was our duty to do. Something within man is always telling him, until he stifles it into silence, that he was meant for immortality, for an endless sequence of ever-widening accomplishment and responsibility which will expand with the growth of powers created in the image of the Infinite God, and destined to have no limit short of the Creator's own perfection. Here is what St Paul speaks of as the upward calling. Out of the depths of his heart one of the giants of human history is telling us of the Divine voice which he hears, and which he would fain make us hear. There was a time when his own ambitions were strangely different, though pursued with the same single-minded energy. Then Christ laid hold of him; and to lay hold of Christ became his master-passion.

Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

His life had never been aimless, but by comparison he had never before had a goal worthy of the name. He falls into his favourite parable as he tells how he fixed his unswerving gaze upon the end of the course, where the wreath of victory shone in fadeless beauty—how past triumphs were forgotten as the racer sped forward, with but one thought within him, centred utterly upon his one great aim.

2. If only we knew how to make the Kingdom of Christ on earth the one end of life, and everything else a means to that end! The world of science and art and learning, the world of politics and society and industry, knows well enough the motto, 'One Thing.' How constantly it happens that 'the sons of this age are, for their own generation, shrewder than the sons of the light'! We have laid upon us the task of bringing in a golden age. It could, it would, be accomplished if only we were what we ought to be. If our lives did but reflect as they might the Life of lives, if we were strenuous and passionate in our zeal, pure and above reproach in all our dealings with others, unselfish, winning, and wise in our daily life, how persuasive our example would be, how rapidly would men take know-

[1] *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 273.

ledge of us that we had been with Jesus, how soon would the infection of such happiness and purity spread in a world of wandering men and blind! It is not mere guesswork which prompts us to say this. Do not we ourselves know men and women whose lives are after this model—saints of God who have come down from the mount, and know not that the skin of their face still shines as they move among men? Have we not seen how their beauty wins those amidst whom they live?

Such lived not in the past alone,
But thread to-day the unheeding street;
And stairs, to sin and famine known,
Sing with the welcome of their feet.

¶ In a book called *More Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian*, by Major Fitzroy Gardner, who must have been one of the casual acquaintances who come and go and bring their generous appreciation with them, he speaks of my mother as 'no ordinary highbrow but a very beautiful woman whose presence, as much as her writing, was an inspiration. . . . She had the face of an angel and alas! a far too frail physique. . . . She possessed an instinctively gracious dignity of manner, yet the sense of humour of a frivolous girl. Almost all her guests whom one first met on those delightful occasions one desired to meet again. I remember one Sunday evening coming out of the house by chance with a woman of the world, more distinguished for her physical charm than for intellect. As we walked towards the Bayswater Road, talking about our hostess as if she had been some minor deity, my companion suddenly remarked, "I feel somehow as if I must go to church and pray."'[1]

Within our reach is the power of being a benediction wherever we go, of leaving behind us a memory fragrant as that of heroes who ascended on high and obtained priceless gifts for men. And we are content to say of our business or our pleasure, 'One thing I do,' and to reserve half-heartedness and occasional service for that which is to last for ever!

3. The upward calling sounds to us to-day with a voice clear as in the days when St Paul followed it, and its watchword is still the same. If serving two masters has become more and more difficult in the spheres of ordinary life, it has not become easier when the highest ideals of man are concerned. One Lord, one faith—one ambition, one reward—everywhere that Divine number rings in the ears of him who would please God, and so attain that for which he came into the world. John Wesley's rule for his helpers, 'You have nothing to do but to save souls,' is not meant for any one class of Christians alone; it belongs to all. For there is not one method only of saving souls. The aim to win human lives by the example of a life that belongs entirely to Christ is one which must be supreme in every real Christian's heart, but it will work itself out in many ways. So it falls that the voice which bids every disciple say, 'One thing I do,' calls him to do many things, because he will do them all to the glory of God. The Master bids His servants eagerly enter every field of human activity to claim it for Himself. They should be foremost in the pursuit of knowledge, for all Truth is of God, and more perfect understanding of creation can only bring men nearer to the Creator in the end. They must be foremost in every systematic work for the alleviation of human suffering—for their Master ministered to the bodies as well as the souls of men. In Parliament, to see to the passing of good laws; in local government, to watch over everything which tends to the purification of life in town or country; in business, to promote justice and brotherliness between employers and employed; in all these things and many other spheres, in countless different ways, one thing they do, for every task they accomplish is done for the glory of God, which is the good of men.

[1] Viola Meynell, *Alice Meynell*, 144.

The Religious Use of Memory

Phil. iii. 13, 14.—'One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal' (R.V.).

1. In one sharp and decisive sentence we are shown how the Christian man deals with the legacy of his past. St Paul is writing to people who seem to have been priding themselves upon what life had already given them. They were thinking and speaking as though they had attained everything of value and nothing lay beyond for them to win. That was the subtle

peril of their past experience. Its very greatness was in danger of robbing their future of opportunity.

Here is the figure of a great man confronted with that spirit. He also has great experiences behind him on which memory loves to dwell. If the Philippians are tempted to live in the past he has more reason still. But he will not. Life is a race in which the tension is never relaxed—a contest in which the backward glance cannot bring the prize. He will not count himself to have apprehended. The race is not over. He will not think of the steps that have been taken because of the course which has yet to be covered. 'One thing I do,' he says, and the note of decision and finality is in his words, 'One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind—and stretching forward like the runner to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal.' We see the force of the figure—the forward bent body of the runner, every muscle strained to reach the goal, the mind intent on what is in front, nothing in his thoughts which would hinder or distract him in the effort which has yet to be made.

¶ To score a victory in the Olympic Games in competition with the world's greatest athletes is to reach the pinnacle of fame in the world of athletics. On one occasion the two hundred metre race was being run. Charles Paddock, the famous American runner, was leading the field, and though pressed hard toward the finish, neared the tape an apparent winner. Just at the last, however, he turned his head to look at his rivals, one of whom in the very fraction of a second flashed across the line, a winner by inches.

The phrase, 'forgetting the things which are behind,' has an increasing wonder when we think of the man who wrote it, and some of the things in his past experience which he seems willing to forget. It is easy to be understood that St Paul was not only willing, but even anxious, to forget some of the things which memory recalled. How often, for example, must the memory of Stephen's face have haunted him, and the thought of his own part in that tragedy burdened his mind.

O, was it *I* that stood there, all consenting?
I—at whose feet the young men's clothes were laid?
Was it *my* will that wrought that hot tormenting?
My heart that boasted over Stephen, dead?

Must not the great Apostle have doubted again and again his fitness for his work, just because of the memory of what happened on that one day? It is not wonderful that he should want to forget that. But it is wonderful that he should make no distinction between things like that and some of his other experiences.

How, for example, should he ever want to forget the day on the road to Damascus—the day that changed his whole life? There were other things of a like nature also, for this letter to the Philippians was probably the last letter he wrote; it was the work of an old man with the best part of his life behind him. And yet here he is nearing the end, determined to forget the past in his concentration upon the future. It is a wonderful picture—faith transforming the natural retrospect of old age into confident and youthful anticipation!

But we must not misunderstand the meaning of the phrase. The word 'forget' does not mean that St Paul wanted to wipe the past out of mind altogether. To erase the past in that complete sense would be to lose all causes of thankfulness—all sense of gratitude at the wonder of God's ways. And that is certainly not the spirit of these words, or of the man who wrote them.

We know well enough from his letters that St Paul looked back over his life and marvelled at the miracle of God's grace, which in spite of everything had accepted him, and found a work for him to do. For all his victories he gave continued thanks. From all his defeats he extracted the deepest message. 'I thank my God,' he says in one of his letters, 'I thank my God who has always caused me to triumph in Christ.' Even in seeming defeat Paul discovered spiritual victory, and he did not forget to give thanks for what the world would call his weakness. The man who wrote to others, 'in everything give thanks,' practised what he preached.

The memory of the past overwhelmed his soul with thankfulness to the God who had led him and used him in such wondrous ways. To him forgetting the past did not imply the thankless spirit. But his resolve to forget what had been was part of a determination not to

rest or relax any effort. He would find room for no memory of failure which left depression in its train, nor for the remembrance of victories which might unduly exalt. His should be the tense mind of the athlete, with eyes and thought fixed on the goal. And in that resolve St Paul is the type and illustration of the Christian spirit, with the past behind and the future in front.

2. This is God's will for every child of His—that men should forget the past and stretch forward towards the mark. God wishes no child of His to go through life with the backward look. Whatever the past may have been, it is not God's will that it should hinder us. There are those that cannot help recalling memories of downfall. And in consequence they are depressed. Sometimes it is worse than that. The fall may have left so deep a mark on the soul that it seems as if nothing can wipe it out. There are many lives that long above all things to be able to say, 'I will forget the things which are behind.' That word cannot be said of ourselves, but it can be said by every life which lays hold of God's promises of forgiveness and restoration. It is not His will that one of His children should be held in bondage to the past. For the very first of His dealings with the soul is to set it free.

¶ One great truth for us all, says Goethe, is not that the past is sullied, but that the future is unsullied. It is in this sense that we should forget the things that are behind and reach on to the things that are before. I may be reminded that to talk about forgetting what we cannot help remembering is a contradiction in terms. So it is; but, thank God, it is not a contradiction in experience. Others besides the Apostle Paul have come to realize that literal remembrance and moral forgetfulness can exist side by side in the same memory and heart. I have done things in the past, sometimes from want of thought, sometimes from want of heart—things I remember with sorrow and contrition. But I have repented of them, and prayed for grace to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. And God has enabled me to realize His forgiveness so effectually that to-day the sins, while remembered, are morally forgotten.[1]

[1] A. Shepherd, *Bible Studies in Living Subjects*, 9.

¶ No modern writer took a more serious view of sin than Robert Louis Stevenson; that gives all the more point to his advice: 'Never allow your mind to dwell on your own misconduct; that is ruin. The conscience has morbid sensibilities; it must be employed but not indulged. . . . One of the leading virtues is to let oneself alone.' And again he prays: 'Help us with the grace of courage, that we be none of us cast down when we sit lamenting amid the ruins of our happiness or our integrity; touch us with fire from the altar, that we may be up and doing to rebuild our city.'

But if past failure has its perils, past victory has even more. And the gravity of this danger lies in the fact that, while every man must long to escape from the thought of defeat, few wish to be free from the memories of triumph and success. Yet it is equally necessary in the interest of the future. This is the danger which we can see overtaking men, both individually and collectively. How often do we discover in human life a growth in spirit up to a certain point, till success smothers it, and an idle contentment takes its place. We find it easy to be content with conformity to the average. Measuring ourselves by our fellows we find little reason for criticism and heart-searching. How few of us are in this attitude of straining forward depicted by St Paul! We have become the victims of the past, and we have the warrant of the Gospels for saying that such a state is the gravest into which any soul can fall. It was the self-satisfied with whom our Lord could do nothing. Before Christ can do His work in any life its contentment has to be shaken, and if that is a danger which belongs to individual men it is surely evident enough in communities.

¶ Nothing is more perilous to your own salvation, more unworthy of God, or more hurtful to your ordinary happiness than being content to abide as you are.[1]

¶ Sir Joshua Reynolds could not look at any picture remaining in his studio without wishing to retouch it here and there. The forms on the canvas were not as fair as the visions in the painter's mind. Such dissatisfaction always gives ground for the hope that 'the best is yet to be.' The same principle holds good in the spiritual life. The outlook is ominous where there is not a profound self-dissatisfaction.

[1] Fénelon.

The day of peril for states and nations lies not in the strenuous times when their glory is in the making, but in the season of peace which follows. If no man can afford to live upon his past, no nation can take that course with impunity. Then it is that contentment with its kindred evils creeps into the spirit of a people and decay and decline set in.

As with men and nations, so with churches—life is bound up with the forward step, and the eyes on the distant goal. The past may be a help if it is remembered so as to draw from it inspiration for present opportunity. It can only be a hindrance if it leads to a glorying which spends all its energy in speech. All the glory of past days increases the responsibility of those on whom such an inheritance descends. Well did St Paul speak of 'a weight of glory,' for all glory is a burden to be carried by those who claim a share in its lustre.

Our hearts are filled with praise as we think of the years that have passed, and all that they have witnessed—at great and hallowed names, at tasks accomplished, and victories achieved. We are thankful also for God's continued goodness to us—for every quiet evidence that His Spirit is still with us, and His blessing upon our work. But in the midst of such memories we need to remind ourselves that the God to whom we look in gratitude summons us forward. He has new tasks for us to do. There are conquests yet to be made. 'I follow after—I press on toward the goal.'

¶ It is said that Spain once stamped on her coins the Pillars of Hercules, and took as her motto *Ne plus ultra*; but when the bold spirit of Columbus passed beyond those Pillars, and discovered the New World, she omitted the *ne* and left *plus ultra*—more beyond.

One look behind; but not for idle dreaming;
Hope beckons on to heights that greet the sky;
While voices speak of Time's brief hours redeeming,
To nerve the heart for toil and victory.

One look behind; it may be one of sorrow,
O'er broken vows, and duties left undone;
But wait, my soul, on God; then, with each morrow,
His strength'ning grace receive thy race to run.

One look behind; but not for vain regretting
O'er golden hours that soothed life's fret and care;
Forward! be still thy cry, the past forgetting,
Save that which bears thee up on wings of prayer.

One look behind; sweet mercy's path reviewing;
One goal ahead, one faith, one hope above;
Up then, with pilgrim staff heaven's way pursuing,
To reach the radiant home of endless love![1]

The Principles of Spiritual Progress

Phil. iii. 13, 14.—'One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus' (R.V.).

The progress of civilization is, or was till very recently, the watchword of the Western world. Men speak of it and write of it with extraordinary enthusiasm. They point exultantly to man's development in the past, to his marvellous evolution from the lower to the higher forms of organized existence, and they declare with a passionate confidence that this advancement must continue. Many who have lost belief in almost everything else still put their trust in progress. To some the ideal of the great 'going on' is even a kind of religion. They can take as their own the sentence of a Russian novelist, 'My faith is in civilization, and I require no further creed.'

And yet, are we indeed making the great progress that we fancy? It is certainly true that, tested merely by material standards, our advance has been amazing. But man does not live by bread alone, and sooner or later we are bound to face the question whether the development of our spiritual qualities has kept pace with the increase of our bodily satisfaction. How is it with our spirit? Are we really better men, higher men, more divinely-minded men, than the men, say, of the sixteenth century, or of the sixth, or of the first? Are we nearer to the realization of the supreme ideal? Are we steadily approaching the perfection of Christian character?

We throw out acclamations of self-thinking, self-admiring
With, for every mile run faster, 'Oh, the wondrous, wondrous age!'

[1] J. P. Wood.

Little thinking if we work our souls as nobly as our iron,
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage.

Material advance is good—advance in science, advance in mechanism, advance in the art of subduing the forces of Nature to the service of man—we acknowledge it to be good. But unless there be something more to show than submarines and aeroplanes, something more even than comfortable homes and model schools and sanitary factories and well-lighted streets, we have insufficient reason for so priding ourselves on progress.

How, then, may the spiritual development, the development of character which is the essence of all true progress, most readily be effected? By conforming to what laws, or by obeying what conditions, may earnest men and women rise to the summits of human life? We may get some light upon this subject if we study awhile a fragment of autobiography of an eminently progressive man—perhaps the most progressive man of the whole ancient world—the Apostle Paul. 'One thing I do,' he writes, 'forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' At least three conditions are necessary.

1. *Definite Purpose.*—The first necessity for progress, according to the Apostle, seems to be purpose—a definite, spiritual purpose, a purpose directed to Christ. 'One thing I do,' says he—'I press on toward the goal.' It is the maxim of a French genius that 'great souls are not those which have fewer passions and more virtue than common ones, but those only which have greater aims.' And something like that was the opinion of St Paul. Continually he emphasizes the need of a noble aim. He knows how prone men are to dissipate their powers, to fritter away their energy in frivolous, futile activities, and both in himself and others he seeks to counteract the tendency. Get an object in life, he cries. Have a purpose. Find out what it is that is best in all the world, and bend your whole living to that.

¶ The warm tenderness with which men everywhere have taken Burns into their hearts is the highest tribute to his rare gifts. Had the author of *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, up there amidst the heather and the tarns and the frowning crags and the grazing flocks of dear old Scotland, only kept himself as steady to one dominating purpose, and as clean, as did the author of *In Memoriam* from the hour of the dawning consciousness of his poetic capacities to the hour of his death on the Isle of Wight, how much worthier would have been the offering laid by this choice soul of Ayrshire on the altar of letters, and how much more lofty the things for which his life would have stood! The qualities wanting were first of all a high moral purpose, and then unswerving fidelity to this purpose.[1]

Now, is not this a warning which we may all of us take to heart? There is nothing, perhaps, in modern society which so impresses an observer as its apparent aimlessness. In every class alike there seems to be an absence of clear intention, a want of a great determining Christian ideal, a lack of the sense of consecration to a purpose. Look around and what do you see? At the top of the social scale you find an aristocracy of birth and wealth, whirling about in a breathless rush of incessant sociabilities; living for half the year at furious pressure, and resting during the other half only to recruit its shattered nerves for the pleasures and tasks to come. And what is the inner meaning of this feverish turmoil of life? Nobody knows. What is its ultimate purpose? No one can say. Or take the middle class. The men spend most of the day in their offices in the City; the women are much engaged with household occupations, with motoring and visiting, with bridge-parties and bazaars. The life is on the whole a virtuous life, often a useful life; and yet is it not frequently an unpremeditated life? What are these people tending to? Nobody knows. What is the goal of their endeavour and their pleasure? No one can say. The same thing is true of the so-called working-class. Life is here shut up within the narrowest horizons. Men spin out their existence in a dull routine of work, monotonous as the ticking of a clock, unillumined by any purpose, uninspired by any ideal. You ask these plodding workers, What is it all about? What are you working for beyond the bare supply of your material necessities? But nobody knows. Does life mean really

[1] F. A. Noble, *Spiritual Culture*, 115.

more than a factory and a football match, a shop and a Sunday excursion? No one can tell.

What a contrast there is between these restless, aimless people and the great Apostle Paul! Here is a man who starts right away with an object in life—something to strive for, something to achieve, something worth achieving. He has a goal to which his whole existence tends. And that goal?—it is Jesus Christ. His ruling passion is to get nearer to Jesus Christ, to grow up into Jesus Christ, to do the work of Jesus Christ. That is his dominant purpose. He aims. He gives his life a centre. He strives to bring everything—all his faculties and powers, all his experiences and activities—into relation with that centre.

2. *Independence of the Past.*—The second necessity for progress, according to the Apostle, is independence of the past. 'Forgetting the things which are behind,' he says, 'and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on.' He dismisses the past, forgets it. His thoughts are all of the future. The rule for St Paul, for this most progressive of men, is not the rule of that which was, nor even the rule of that which is, but the rule of that which is to be.

But is this right? Is this true? Surely we are not intended simply to ignore the past. We often revert to the things which are behind, and we cannot but believe that we are justified in doing so. It is good to recall the old scenes, the old struggles, the old triumphs. We like to remember both the bright days and the dark days; to remember how often when our night was at its blackest and all our hopes seemed dead, the morning came gradually stealing over the sky, and the song of the birds awoke, and the cheerfulness and energy of life began once more. For the better part of our wisdom, too, we are indebted to the past. How much we have learnt from it! What teaching we have found in the world's history, in our nation's history, in our own history! Where should we all be now without those lessons?

¶ 'The past is myself . . .' cries Robert Louis Stevenson. 'In the past is my present fate; and in the past also is my real life.' Truly it was no shallow thinker who said, 'Poor is the man who has no yesterday.'

But it is not against the discriminating use of the past that the Apostle would protest. It is only against the abuse of it. He warns us to be on our guard against the thraldom of the past, against its deadening influence. For the sake of present life and present action, it is needful again and again to forget the things which are behind. Nietzsche has laid stress upon this idea. 'Forgetfulness,' he writes, 'is a property of all action. . . . Life in any true sense is absolutely impossible without forgetfulness.'

¶ 'Let us listen only to the experience that urges us on,' says Maeterlinck; 'it is always higher than that which throws or keeps us back. Let us reject all the counsels of the past that do not turn us towards the future.'

Some Christians are hindered in the spiritual life by excessive absorption in the historic past. They are paralysed by antiquity. They cannot bring themselves to abandon the old ideas, the old establishments, the venerable formulas, the customs of their fathers. They dare not venture out of the trodden ways or commit themselves to anything which is not sanctioned by a precedent. Thus their powers of soul and mind and will are stifled by conservatism. How well would it be if such would take example from St Paul! In spite of his natural love of the past, in spite of his respect and reverence for the past, St Paul, when occasion demands, can leave the past behind. Everything that constrains, everything that blocks and stops the sweep of the spirit and the flow of life, is utterly left behind. Paul presses on independent of the past. Paul presses on to the new hope and the better future.

There are others who are hindered in the spiritual life by excessive absorption in their own individual past. Like Bunyan's Christian at the beginning of his pilgrimage, they are weighed down under a burden—the burden of past sins, of past follies, of past falls, of miserable failures and disappointments and mistakes. That burden crushes them. It takes all the spring out of life. To such, again, there comes the salutary warning—Forget. It is better to forget. We cannot more effectually redeem a wasted past than by raising ourselves out of it, by healing its wounds, by replacing its losses, by repairing so far as we may its broken moulds.

Let us forget the things that vexed and tried us,
The worrying things that caused our souls to fret;
The hopes that, cherished long, were still denied us
Let us forget.

Let us forget the little slights that pained us,
The greater wrongs that rankle sometimes yet;
The pride with which some lofty one disdained us
Let us forget. . . .

But blessings manifold, past all deserving,
Kind words and helpful deeds, a countless throng,
The fault o'ercome, the rectitude unswerving
Let us remember long.

3. *Unceasing Effort.*—There is yet a third necessity for progress. And this, according to St Paul, is effort—ceaseless effort, calculated effort. 'Not laxity,' it has been said, 'but tension is what the Divine Trainer demands in the spiritual muscle of those whom He sends into the arena.'

In *worldly affairs* we are ready enough to recognize the necessity of effort. There are no gains without pains. 'The law of nature,' writes Ruskin, 'is that a certain quantity of work is necessary to produce a certain quantity of good, of any kind whatever. If you want knowledge, you must toil for it; if food, you must toil for it; and if pleasure, you must toil for it.' 'Nature,' says Goethe, 'knows no pause, and attaches a curse upon all inaction.' Yes, it is in effort and toil, when the bow of a man's energy is bent to the very utmost, when his faculties are working at full speed under high pressure, that the great deeds are done and the great personalities are generated. It is always in effort.

¶ 'He laboured,' writes Goethe's biographer, 'with the passionate patience of genius.' 'Having decided what was to be done,' observes Emerson of Napoleon, 'he did that with might and main. He put out all his strength. He risked everything and spared nothing—neither ammunition, nor money, nor troops, nor generals, nor himself.'

And the same holds good in *spiritual affairs*. Here also, whether we will or no, we are subjected to the law of effort. We must do or we shall die. We must press on or we perish. There is no alternative. Often, no doubt, we crave for a cessation of the struggle, for rest from the sting and challenge, for abatement, at least, of this vehemence of exertion. But it may not be. We cannot evade the great condition of our life or disclaim our responsibility. The race must needs be run. The path is clear before us, and we are cowards, unfaithful to ourselves and to our future, if we do not pursue it to the end.

The progress of civilization, of which we boast so much to-day, depends on nothing else than our own spiritual development, on the advancement which we make in the qualities and graces of the genuinely Christian character. And this advance in turn—this spiritual advance—on what does that depend? Not on the blind operation of the natural laws of heredity; not on the calculated action of a society or a government. It depends, after God, on ourselves—on our own will, our own zeal, our own spiritual activity. Should we not be wise, then, if we endeavoured to put into practice those grand principles of progress that are laid down by St Paul? By purpose, by self-emancipation from the bondage of the past, by honest effort, even we may run like him our earthly course, like him attain at length the wished-for goal.

¶ There is a touching passage in Bunyan's immortal allegory which tells how two pilgrims, who had followed the Apostle's plan, reached the end of their long journey, and were welcomed after their labours into the City of the King. 'Now I saw in my dream,' writes Bunyan, 'that these two men went in at the gate; and lo! as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them—the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the City rang again for joy, and it was said unto them "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."'

The Working Value of Faith

Phil. iii. 16.—'Whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk' (R.V.).

THESE words cover the whole of life. They run back into creed and forward into conduct. They relate root and shoot, and are an implicit warning against their severance. They find in belief

the dynamic of behaviour, and in behaviour the only working value of belief.

1. The Church has always held more truth than she has ever translated into life. It is the universally admitted truths, the everywhere conceded claims, that are in danger of being lost sight of. This is why any attack that is made upon the great verities of the Christian faith always reacts with wholesome effect upon the Christian Church. It drives men back from mere definitions, and makes them dwell among the realities for which their symbols and their watchwords stand. As in a financial panic the solvency of a bank depends upon its ability to honour its notes and redeem its paper with gold, so in times of theological unrest confidence is restored only as the real value of Christian doctrine is found to correspond with its face-value. These are the great revealing moments in which the unsuspected wealth of the Church is laid bare, and in thus being driven to draw upon her spiritual reserves she is delivered from the tyranny of the letter and the bondage of her creeds.

A constant source of peril to the Church is the number of truths she holds in abeyance—truths that never come into operation. Their actual value does not correspond with their potential value. They are not working up to their registered power. Indeed, some of them are not working at all. Unknown, unsuspected energies lie slumbering in their mighty coils; but they are waiting for some liberating hand to set them free, and thus enable them to demonstrate their working value. It is only when called in question that such truths are set to the task of demonstrating themselves in ways that are forceful and up-to-date. Every great truth is a great trust, not merely to be guarded from desecration, but to be administered with fidelity, and to be strenuously worked up to its highest power. A truth, then, is not something to be believed merely; it is something to be done. The fact that it can be translated into action, expressed in conduct, and made to count for something in the working days of life—this is what gives it value and significance. If a truth cannot be reduced to service and made to operate both inwardly in the rectification of character and outwardly in the reconstruction of society; in a word, if it has no working end and no business value, then it ceases to be of any practical interest, and it becomes a matter of equal indifference whether it be accepted, rejected, or ignored. To hold truths intellectually and to permit them no moral sway is to divide the life against itself. It is to divorce creed from conduct, and to set the hands in conflict with the head. Truth seen, and recognized as such, becomes at once imperative; and not to obey is to betray.

¶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in one of his best-known aphorisms, tells us that 'Truths of all others the most awful and interesting are too often considered as *so* true that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors.'

2. The present age is nothing if not practical, and it cares little for creeds that do not affect behaviour. The world's valuation of belief is based on the quality and quantity of its ethical output. The man in the street is concerned with the working-end of truth, and the supreme vindication of Christian truth is that it has a working-end. Every doctrine, however mystical, has its practical side. Like Jacob's ladder, its head may be lost in the heavens, but its foot is planted on the solid earth; and it is here and now, upon the solid earth, that the truth of the Kingdom must manifest its utility and display its power.

'By their fruits ye shall know them,' is the Master's own formula; and it is as true of systems as it is of individuals. Fruit is a thing that even 'the wayfaring man, though a fool,' can appreciate. He may be lamentably ignorant of the Christian faith on its doctrinal side; but he knows the difference between an employer who 'sweats' his employees and one who translates his creed into kindly thought and loving deed, and recognizes that he holds higher relations to his men than can be expressed or discharged by the payment of a weekly wage. And he knows the difference between the workman who does his duty and one who defrauds his employer by idleness and neglect.

The Christian system not merely submits to the fruit-test, but challenges it. The superiority of Christ's religion over every other lies in the fact that it not only creates the highest ideals, but supplies the moral energies through which alone those ideals can be realized. Take

the doctrine of universal brotherhood. Even though it could be shown that Christ was not the first to enunciate it, yet He was the first to place it upon a working basis. He linked it up with the common Fatherhood of God, out of which all human relationships spring, and upon which they must ever depend for their sanction and support. This primary and fundamental relation, when realized, guarantees the philanthropies of Christianity against fluctuation and caprice. It secures them from fickleness and uncertainty by lifting them out of the realm of mere sentiment, and putting them under the rule of a great principle. It is this which gives them their ethical value. Christianity sets no value upon actions, however outwardly beneficent, unless they spring from love. The moral value of what we do in the sacred name of charity, as well as its reflex result upon our own character, will be determined solely by the motives which inspire it. But if love be the determining factor of value, then the widow's mite may equal the munificence of the multimillionaire, for the capacity of loving deeply is possessed by poor and rich alike.

3. Christ's Cross, to be fully preached, must be set in relation, not only to a man's past record, but to his future behaviour. This ethical side of salvation, with all its practical bearings, requires to be affirmed to-day, perhaps as never before. The revival needed in our time is not emotional, but ethical—in other words, a revival of simple, downright honesty, both in the worlds of speech and of commerce. The Christianity that will save our modern civilization will be in striking contrast to the invertebrate, anæmic, and insipid variety which in so many places is the despair of the Church and the derision of the world. It must be manly, virile, robust, able to stand down in the market-place and the exchange, not fearing, but inviting, contact; it must have a moral output that will work for purification and health throughout the length and breadth of human affairs. Such a Christianity will not regard the Atonement as a clever expedient for escaping the fulfilment of obligations, but as a Divinely appointed means of energizing us for their full and fair discharge.

¶ 'Christianity,' declared Coleridge, 'is not a Theory, or a Speculation; but a Life. Not a Philosophy of Life, but a Life and a living Process.' Dr Temple applied this principle to all doctrines—notably to the doctrine of Easter Day. 'Try to live by it,' he said to the boys at Rugby: 'Try to live as if that other world were immediately before your eyes; try to live as if you were following your great Captain on the road to victory; and, believe me, you will never find the doctrine stale or commonplace or powerless!'[1]

Citizenship in the Kingdom of God does not mean retirement from the kingdom of man. Christianity is a force with a double objective. It exerts itself not only inwardly in the reconstruction of the individual, but outwardly in the reconstruction of society. The citizen of the new kingdom must permeate, with purifying potencies, the society which surrounds him. He is required by the laws of the Christian commonwealth to set up relations with the existing social order, to the end that it may be saved. Any policy of aloofness will be clear dereliction of duty. He must be in the world, not apologetically, but outspokenly, and with all the force of an active and strenuous manhood. He is not to leave the world to itself. He is to conquer it for Christ. He has a right to be here; and as long as there is work for him to do, this is the best of all possible worlds in which to be.

¶ The religion of Lord Shaftesbury was intensely personal, but it was also intensely practical. His claim to immortality rests on the fact that he *did things*. In the mines, the factories, the prisons, and among the waifs of the city he effected reforms by which life was transfigured for thousands. 'My Lords,' exclaimed the Duke of Argyll, in a speech delivered in 1885, 'the social reforms of the past century have not been due to a political party; they have been due to the influence, the character, and the perseverance of one man: I refer, of course, to Lord Shaftesbury.'

From the very inception of Christianity there have been certain great truths that have constituted the dynamic of all aggressive work. But these truths require to be periodically recovered, reaffirmed, and reincarnated. Every period of religious defection has been due to one or other of these truths falling out of view, and every period of revival has been due to the recovery and reaffirmation of some forgotten or neglected truth. Very much of modern

[1] *Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ii. 670.

missionary enterprise, both at home and abroad, instead of being fed and sustained by perennial streams from the great source and centre of all spiritual energy, is running on its own acquired and rapidly diminishing momentum. The Church's need of money and of men is, after all, only secondary. It is merely a symptom of a deeper, more urgent, and spiritual need, which, if met, would meet every need beside. No Church can be aggressive that holds the deposit of truth as a dead letter. The word of Christ must dwell in it richly; that is, reproductively.

The Church is to reincarnate the Word. Here again the Word is to be made flesh and dwell among men, that they may see His glory—every member of His Church a living, breathing, burning Word of God, expressing the thought of His mind and the love of His heart. This is the translation of the Word for which the world is waiting. It is this Immanuel, 'God with us,' that alone can energize the Church; this alone can feed the fires of her missionary zeal, and send her out everywhere seeking that she may save. We need no new gospel, but we need rightly to understand and fully to work the gospel we have.

To preach this gospel effectively, the Church must believe in it with adoring reverence, with a passionate devotion, and as the one and only way of return for men to the heart and home of God. Whatever the first missionaries of the Cross may have doubted, they had an unshaken faith in the power of the gospel they preached.

If our religion has degenerated into a matter of mere creed—

> A lifeless form
> Through which the Spirit breathes no more,

there is but one way of rekindling our love for Him, and that is by dwelling on His love for us. Let us go back to Calvary, fall down at His feet, and get to understand His heart, till such a love for Him shall be kindled as shall gather up and focus all the forces of our life into a burning and a shining flame.

The Responsibility of Self-Assertion

A Study

Phil. iii. 17.—'Be ye imitators together of me' (R.V.).
Phil. iv. 9.—'The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do' (R.V.).

Most people have at some time or other to assert themselves. For the sake of others and at any risk of misconception, it is their duty to emphasize their personalities as the media of certain truths, to lay special stress upon their individual habits and hopes, to give unwonted prominence to their own characters, to insist uncompromisingly and modestly upon attention to what they say and obedience to what they order. Where self-assertion is a condition of assistance and a method of service, undue modesty passes into a positive temptation. Certainly the world abounds in caricatures of self-assertion. The very word is justly shadowed through its connection with domineering and pretentious egotism, and it is small wonder that the spirit which it represents should be frequently misunderstood and avoided. But only weak people are frightened away from truth by its caricatures. Indubitably an ethical truth lies behind the term 'self-assertion.' Possibly it is a primitive lever on others, but it is a lever, and, as the main point is to get conscience and will moved, the use of this method is quite a legitimate function for the stronger nature. Self-assertion helps the weaker to realize certain duties. It puts an ideal into the concrete. Consequently many who would remain motionless before a claim presented in more abstract form are roused by the effectiveness and attractiveness of duty in the persuasive guise of flesh and blood. This is obviously true of hero-worship, the extreme form of self-assertion, and its consequences. But the moderate, various forms—sentiments of loyalty, admiration, esteem—are equally energetic, and cannot be thrown aside as merely primitive. They are characteristic of certain types of susceptibility, and it is primarily through them that duty is very often conceived and executed. Hence to stimulate these forms and feelings is a sound part of human responsibility.

¶ 'I have to-day seen the face of Garibaldi,' said Madame Meuricoffre, 'and all the devotion of his friends is made as clear as day to me. One could love the cause without seeing him,

but in seeing him you seem to be suddenly gifted with the power of seeing it as he sees it, and you love it better for his sake, while you wholly honour and admire him for its sake.'

Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.[1]

1. In the seventh decade of the first Christian century, with the New Testament yet unwritten, the living ideal of the Christ-life was far from being stereotyped in words or habits. Fluid and free, its appeal had to come largely through men's experience and observation of one another, and the inevitable reproduction of character. The channel of education was chiefly the seen or remembered character of definite individuals, the advice and conduct of the best people. Probably for each community one or two, dead or living, absent or present, represented the ideal of the Christian spirit. Acquaintance with these became a standard and stimulus to the rest, who were thus enabled to preserve some sense of definiteness, cohesion, and actuality in their ideas of the faith. Paul was perfectly aware that his friends were surrounded in Philippi by other and opposing types of character, not merely pagan, but semi-Christian. Such ideals were fascinating, close, solid. His own, he knew, was yet uncommon; if it was to become through memory and admiration any power, it required emphasis and repetition. Hence, under the circumstances, there was no alternative save to point men to their impressions and memories of himself. He had to stand for a palpable ideal of Christianity. In view of outside competing claims, to reproduce the Christian character demanded an effort against inward indolence and reluctance. Obviously, to aid this struggling aspiration by means of his own vivid and consistent character became for the Apostle a sensible, clear line of mission. He was charged more than ever with the task of making visible in himself the new spirit and distinctiveness of Christian experience, until it became permanent, intelligible, and attractive by itself to others. And for all the popularization of the Christian ideal since the first century, this function has not yet become an anachronism. According to the sincerity and richness of his character, each man still stands to some others authoritatively for a more or less large portion of the ideal.

Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of His light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.

2. The natural scruples which are started by any counsel of this kind run in two directions.

(1) Self-assertion is charged with *pride*. But pride is merely the accompanying risk, not the inevitable element, of genuine self-assertion, and men like the Apostle Paul are stamped for the most part with a simple, firm modesty in their services. The fact is, most people are apt to shrink from 'asserting' themselves, not so much because it outrages their fine modesty, as from the depressing sense of incongruity. To direct attention to their personal lives would be to court ridicule. They are conscious of inspiring neither respect nor any thrilling admiration, thanks to the trivial, inconsistent character which they actually possess. Hence they fear, and fear justly, the obvious retort. Genuine self-assertion is impossible to the majority, not through their humility, but through their moral poverty. Hesitation and scruples on this line are more often the result of conscious failure than the fear of subtle pride. As the character of Paul implies, the best safeguard against the self-important spirit is the sheer sense of responsibility for oneself and others. Definite, practical dependence upon a higher Will and Power furnishes the natural salvation from pharisaism. Besides, pride is impossible in regard to objects which are common to all, and the Apostle persistently refuses to be considered exceptional. Evidently he indicates that his vigour and attainments are the effect of Another's life, which is being brought to emphasis in him specially, in order that others may recognize its real nature, and believe it lies open equally to themselves. That is the condition, as it is the object, of self-assertion—to interpret and mediate for others a universal possession.

(2) This answers by anticipation the companion-scruple which charges self-assertion with *barrenness*. Sincerely practised for the will and in the work of Another it is not vain. Such obedience carries a power in it. As a matter of fact those whose confidence comes through loyalty to God are the people who win confidence

[1] Cowper.

and loyalty from others. Paul's power of attracting younger men to himself is patent. Already he had, as we say, a school of sympathetic followers. In self-assertion he had absolute confidence; it had been his method from the first, and long ago his power of impressing others had produced results which were accepted facts. 'Where he did such good work,' writes Meredith, outlining the character of a youthful leader, 'was in sharpening the fellows to excel, . . . and it was not done by exhortations off a pedestal, like St Paul at the Athenians, it breathed out of him every day of the week. He carried a light for followers. Whatever he demanded of them, he himself did it easily.' But neither in Athens nor elsewhere does Paul seem to have been addicted to the pedestal-method. Otherwise his self-assertion would have missed effectiveness. His power lay mostly in a serene self-confidence born of personal devotion to the cause, and of a measure of achievement. Where advice is backed in this way by a consistently advancing character, it becomes as nearly irresistible as any force may be in the field of human nature.

¶ 'If he were not sure that he was a great man, he was at least sure that he was one set apart to do great things.' Stevenson is speaking of John Knox, and he proceeds thus aptly: 'There may be something more finely sensitive in the modern humour, that tends more and more to withdraw a man's personality from the lessons he inculcates or the cause that he has espoused; but there is a loss herewith of wholesome responsibility; and, when we find in the works of Knox, as in the Epistles of Paul, the man himself standing nakedly forward, courting and anticipating criticism, putting his character, as it were, in pledge for the sincerity of his doctrine, we had best waive the question of delicacy, and make our acknowledgments for a lesson of courage, not unnecessary in these days of anonymous criticism, and much light, otherwise unattainable, on the spirit in which great movements were initiated and carried forward.' [1]

3. At the same time self-assertion has its limits, and is responsible for observing them. The charge is often levelled against the strong characters of the world, like Augustine, Calvin, and Loyola, that they are too ambitious to have others cast in their own mould, sacrificing individuality to a single imperious type. This is a real danger, and it is fostered by the easy contentment of many people in a blind obedience or a false submission to more powerful wills. To live thus among second-hand views is to be losing the soul. Complete deference even to the dominion of a good person is ultimately a paralysis. Consequently it is necessary that individuality be respected and its value enhanced. No mere *ipse dixit* will suffice. Self-assertion really implies a more or less intelligent imitation. A true relation of this kind involves on the side of the recipient a constant effort and desire to understand, and upon the side of the stronger nature a scrupulous provision and care to prevent the extinction or undue suppression of the other's genuine self. In this way self-assertion, by its very success, may become eventually superfluous in a given direction, as the weaker character is lifted to the other's level, and enabled to think and act without continuous incitement or instruction from the outside. Such at least is the goal of true development. Consequently the responsibility for self-assertion covers the need not only of understanding where and how to exert this influence of personality, but also of determining the suitable occasions upon which it should be withheld, and the particular individuals to whom its unrestrained action might become a source of moral weakness. For, if this ascendency of the higher over the lower experience is to be a genuine factor in the latter's moral growth, the pressure must be healthy: that is to say, of sincere intention, but also and especially, timely chosen.

[1] *Men and Books.*

Citizenship

Phil. iii. 20.—'Our citizenship is in heaven' (R.V.).

Philippi was 'the chief city of that part of Macedonia' and a colony of Rome. As such, it would recognize the authority of Rome, enforce the laws of Rome, and enjoy the privileges of citizenship no less than in Rome itself. A Roman colony was somewhat different from a colony to-day. Our colonies grow from a group of human beings to communities, gradually developing into organized communal life. A Roman colony implied purpose, design, ideals. The colonists went forth with all the

pride of Roman citizens to represent and reproduce the mother city in the midst of an alien population. Their names were still enrolled in one of the Roman tribes. Every traveller that passed through a colony saw there the insignia of Rome. Cæsar's vast dominions also contained citizens who had neither been born nor brought up in Rome, but who enjoyed the same status as those who had; it was an earnestly desired distinction among all subject races. The Apostle here transfers the same idea to the relations of the Christian with the City of God, eternal in the heavens. He declares that the Christian's patriotism is centred there; his hopes and joys are all associated with it; it is his true country, his everlasting home.

¶ One of the most impressive places in the United States is Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth, Massachusetts. No familiarity with the history of Plymouth Colony can take away the poignant eloquence of those relics preserved there. Every one of the things which came over in the *Mayflower* and which were used in those high days of the planting of the colony—every bit of furniture, the cradle, the kitchen implements, the dishes, the clothing, the Bible—all speak of the loved and noble heritage of England. These men and women did not come to the wilderness to live like savages, to drop their ways of life and 'go native.' They carried on the dear and loved tradition of their English home, its laws, its high sanctities. They carried England with them.[1]

1. *The Privileges of Citizenship.*—Citizenship in ancient times carried with it special privileges.

(1) *Security.*—The right of Roman citizenship gave to its possessor the protection of the State and the best system of laws known among men. A Roman orator declared that the affirmation, 'I am a Roman citizen,' brought aid and safety wherever the Roman authority was acknowledged. A Roman citizen might not be crucified, or scourged, or condemned without proper and public trial. The Roman State claimed to defend its citizens from injustice and cruelty. And this is a recognized duty of civilized governments both in ancient and in modern times. An injury done to a citizen of any European country to-day would be at once a matter of rigorous inquiry, the aggressor would be brought to justice, and reasonable redress of the injury sought. And the analogy of heavenly with human citizenship holds good. There are no more jubilant utterances in the Scriptures than those which refer to this fact: 'God is our refuge and strength'; 'The Lord God is a sun and shield.' At a great crisis in St Paul's life he exclaimed, 'There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.' Earthly governments are sometimes unable to honour this obligation, but the citizens of heaven abide securely under the shadow of the Almighty.

(2) *Fellowship.*—Citizenship introduced to a privileged class, to the select society of the State. And citizenship of heaven is no exception to this general law. It introduces to fellowship with the highest and best. St John writes, 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ.' All the heritage of the past is ours; its patriarchs and prophets, its martyrs and confessors, its saints and heroes—all ours. All the harvest of the present is ours. All the good men and true to-day, of every nation and clime, whatever their names, whatever their sphere of service, are our fellow-citizens. And all the promise of the future is ours. Whatever richness of consecration, whatever fruitfulness of service, whatever splendour of achievement the future may disclose, is all part of the inheritance awaiting us.

(3) *Freedom.*—Freedom is a heritage of priceless worth, but nowhere is its worth seen better than in contrast with slavery. In ancient times the few were free, the multitude enslaved. The citizens were free men, all other subjects slaves; and slaves with no right of appeal against oppression, no redress against wrong. Citizenship means freedom. With what force and frequency this heritage of freedom is promised and proclaimed by the great teachers of the Christian faith! Jesus Christ said, 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'—free from ignorance and superstition; free from the dominance of depraved principles, passions, and purposes; free to work out life's great purpose, to realize its great ideals. The ministry of Jesus Christ was pre-eminently a ministry of emancipation.

[1] H. E. Luccock, *Preaching Values*, 299.

¶ A letter of Albert Schweitzer describes that miracle of emancipation in the experience of West African negroes: 'Christianity is for him the light that shines amid the darkness of his fears; it assures him that he is not in the power of nature-spirits, ancestral spirits, or fetishes, and that no human being has any sinister power over another, since the will of God really controls everything that goes on in the world.

> I lay in cruel bondage,
> Thou cam'st and mad'st me free!

'These words from Paul Gerhardt's Advent hymn express better than any others what Christianity means for primitive man.'[1]

2. *The Duties of Citizenship.*—These never sat lightly on any loyal citizen of ancient times. He felt himself a part, an integral part, of a great community, and was ever ready to do his share in defending its interests, guarding its territory, and sustaining its reputation. Sacrifices great and prolonged might be required in times of national crisis, but they were readily given. Personal interest was merged in the larger interests of the State, and patriotism was one of the most conspicuous virtues of ancient times. And the analogy of citizenship also holds good in respect of its duties, as well as of its honours and privileges. What are its duties?

(1) *To Sustain the Reputation of the City.*—What is the distinctive quality of heavenly citizenship? Is it not holiness of heart and life, and uprightness of character? This is the one badge and quality of heavenly citizens. They may be marked by infinite variety in everything else, but they are all one in this. They belong to different periods in the world's history; they come from different races and climes; they come from all ranks in society; they come from every stage of civilization—but they are all one in Christ Jesus. One message instructs, one hope inspires, one love constrains, and constrains to walk before Him in newness of life. This is the citizen's supreme duty—to keep the reputation of the city untarnished, to walk worthy of the vocation with which he is called. Is there not need for the enforcement of this duty to-day? Is it always that heavenly citizens do honour, do credit, to their citizenship? Are they known by their unvarying spirituality, the integrity of their character, by unblemished life, by sympathy, kindness, generosity? Or do they allow foibles, weaknesses, worldliness or selfishness to dishonour their citizenship, to discredit the Christian name?

¶ The great states of old had their strongly-defined popular characteristics. Athens was learned. Sparta was brave. Corinth was luxurious. What was the strongly-marked feature of those who belonged to the Christian commonwealth? Why, expressed in one word, it was holiness. 'Every foreign country,' said the unknown writer in an early Christian document, 'is a fatherland to them and every fatherland a foreign country. They are in the flesh, yet live not after the flesh. Their life is spent on earth, *but their citizenship is in heaven.* They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are dishonoured and in their dishonour glorified. They are reviled—and bless; outraged—and honour men. . . . In a word, what the soul is in a body, this the Christians are in the world.'

(2) *To Defend its Interests.*—Loyal citizens of Rome were ready to die for her. If an enemy invaded her territory they freely risked their lives in her defence. And true citizens of heaven must be absolutely loyal to the City and Kingdom. Christianity has met and survived many assaults in the days past; but probably each age has to meet its own particular form of attack. We have not to-day the blatant atheism of fifty years ago; but have we not an atheism as deadly and more insinuating in the widespread indifferentism of to-day and the neglect of the ordinances of religion by people of all ranks of society? How is this to be met? Can we thaw its coldness by the warmth and glow of our own spiritual life? Can we attract the people by the charm of our personal character, by real brotherly interest in their welfare? Perhaps this is the lesson we most need, rightly to guard the truest interests of the heavenly city.

(3) *To Extend its Authority.*—There are two conceptions of the Church in the New Testament—the Kingdom of God and the City of God. The Kingdom of God represents a great spiritual conquest, the power of Christianity subjugating the nations of the earth, truth everywhere conquering error, freedom displacing servitude. This conception embraces the setting up of a

[1] *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, 154.

kingdom in which righteousness shall be the supreme law, love the supreme motive, service the supreme ideal.

The idea of the City of God gives us a conception of extension not less real or effective though under a different aspect. It is the commonwealth gradually enlarging itself, the citizens extending themselves to other lands and to alien tribes, making them fellow-citizens with the saints. It is the leaven, leavening the whole lump. St John in his vision of the new heaven and the new earth saw the holy city, and heard a great voice saying, 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.' Is that the Divine conception of an ideal human society? Not a rural scene with its fields and flowers but a city, alive with human activities, and all controlled by the law of righteousness and love. This is the problem of the hour and of every hour: How are the cities of earth to be made cities of heaven; how are vice and crime to be rooted out; how are slums to be replaced by healthy dwellings; how are the conditions of life to be so changed that there shall be work and reasonable remuneration for it, reasonable leisure for recreation and culture, reasonable opportunity for moral and spiritual progress? How is that trinity of evils—intemperance, gambling, impurity—to be destroyed? Only by Christian citizens permeating society with their own spirit and winning aliens and rebels to reconciliation and citizenship. Give us humane legislation, give us wise economic conditions of life, give us education, sanitation, social righteousness; but, above all, give the power of personal regeneration.

¶ Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, caught the substance of the truth when he made the angels who in heaven are nearest to God to be engaged at the same time in lowly ministration to the needy on earth. Dante only interpreted Jesus' words: 'See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.' To be a citizen of heaven, therefore, implies active service to every good cause, the betterment of all social conditions, the sending of the gospel to the heathen nations, the effort to bring to the knowledge of the truth our families, our communities, and all mankind. To be a citizen of heaven is, like Christ, to realize heaven in our own souls, and then to establish it outside of us by going about and doing good.

(4) *To Maintain its Institutions.*—In civic life rates and taxes are essential. The principle is universal; controversy can only gather about the incidence and amount. And, if earthly citizens maintain the institutions of municipal and national life, the citizens of heaven should gladly and generously support all the institutions of religious life, and all the claims of the widest philanthropy. The gifts of Christian men are not a tax, but a thank-offering; not a contribution enforced by the law, but an expression of gratitude and affection. Ought we not to set aside, by a devout and deliberate act, a given, and with increasing wealth an increasing, portion of our income for Christian and philanthropic purposes?

¶ To Mr Morley, wealth was only a means to an end; he valued it only as it could be employed for noble purposes; he held it in trust for the good of others; he felt that it laid upon him the most binding obligations, and that he was accountable not only for making a right use of it, but the best use possible. The distribution of his money was therefore the main business of his life. Mere giving, however enormous the amount bestowed, is, in itself, nothing, and may be worse than nothing. It may be done selfishly, simply to gratify an impulse; it may be done pompously, simply to gratify pride. As Lavater says, 'The manner of giving shows the character of the giver more than the gift itself.' Therefore, when Mr Morley found riches to increase, he felt it to be a religious duty to make the disposal of his money a matter of earnest and most careful solicitude. There was placed in his hands a mighty power for good or for evil, and he felt himself under obligation to God and man to spare no pains in using it to the best advantage for the Church and the world.[1]

We are sometimes charged with being 'otherworldly,' but the peril of to-day is not otherworldliness, but this-worldliness. That is our greatest danger—materialism, mammonism, personal luxury. Our safety and our success depend on the strength with which we grasp the spiritual. Let us be diligent here and now, but let us link ourselves with the forces above—the forces of God and heaven and eternity.

[1] Edwin Hodder, *Life of Samuel Morley*, 285.

The True Life

Phil. iii. 20.—'Our citizenship is in heaven' (R.V.).

1. St Paul says we are a colony of heaven; our citizenship is in heaven. But most of the present-day teaching is that our citizenship is here on earth. Of all the great changes which have come over our thought in the last half century—and they have been great indeed—perhaps none has been greater than this: our extreme concentration upon the things of earth. There has also been another, almost as great and almost equally astonishing: the rapid decay, during the same period, of the sense of sin. But the latter is in point of fact the result of, and dependent on, the former. This acute secularizing of Christianity is indeed a momentous change. We hear no longer appeals to hopes and fears beyond the grave, the scheme of government by rewards and punishments, on which Bishop Butler dilates. Our generation will not listen to them. Give us something to help us here and now is the cry. Tell us how to remedy social evils, and especially how to reduce the amount of physical suffering. Show us how the masses may be made more comfortable. Listen to what the ordinary man says; he is saying, like Jacob, 'If God will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God.' Show him that this is exactly what the Church wishes to do for him; explain to him that now, after eighteen centuries, we are beginning to understand what Christianity really means; that it is a social gospel, a crusade against unequal distribution. Then the Church may yet justify its existence.

Whether we sympathize with this change or not we must admit that it is a great one. From the time of the first martyrs the Christian has always felt that the eternal world is the real world. The only reality which belongs to this present life, he has believed, is that it is indissolubly connected with the true, eternal world. He is bound by his use of it to show himself worthy of his place in that world; and therefore he has always lived in awe and yet in expectation and desire and hope. For at each stage of his ascent, so at least he has believed, he has come nearer to his goal; in response to duty done and life faithfully lived, he has received unmistakable assurance that his feet are on the way. And along with these hopes he has ever been haunted by the possibility that his life and thought and work may not be able to bear the light of that eternal world, and that therefore he will fall from reality, and lose his spiritual birthright and his heavenly citizenship.

Are we so modern that this seems unreal to us? Do we say that this is the real world and the other an ideal world, an ideal which neither is nor ever can be a fact, but which serves its purpose in giving a direction to the will and pictures to the imagination?

2. What was the message of Jesus Christ to mankind? How did He judge human life? The revelation of Jesus Christ was a revelation of human life based upon certain great truths. The essence of Christianity is a transvaluation of all values in the light of our Divine sonship and heavenly citizenship. The first Christians were accused of turning the world upside down. This is just what the teaching of Christ does if the average man sees the world right side up. The things that are seen are temporal, fugitive, relatively unreal. The things that are not seen are eternal; real in their changeless activity and inexhaustible fullness of meaning. Jesus Christ Himself lived in the presence of these timeless realities. He communed continually with His heavenly Father. Every joy was for Him a thanksgiving, every wish a prayer. He was still, St John tells us, in heaven, even whilst He was with men on earth; indeed, His great work was just this, that He made earth and heaven one. And so He tried to teach His incredulous disciples that we can all have immediate access to our Father in heaven, who cares for all His children. He taught them that no real harm—by which He by no means meant outward harm—can happen to those who are God's children; and that man's true happiness in life depends chiefly on three things: first, absolute sincerity or single-mindedness; second, ready sympathy or warm affections; and, third, that loyal and unfaltering allegiance to the noblest that we know which may be called doing the will of God, and which, He taught us, the tug of this world will make impossible for us, unless our hopes are truly fixed on something higher and deeper than this world.

¶ Macaulay points out that Cromwell met and conquered the world of his day, as represented by the Stuart and his adherents. Arrayed against him stood the king and his court, nobles and prelates, cavaliers and clergy, poets and dramatists—all that was stately, reverend, brilliant, fascinating in the England of the time. There was no possibility, as he soon saw, of his overcoming such an array by the aid of merely professional soldiers, of men who felt the charm of the world as keenly as those against whom they fought. Before he could hope to overcome the Cavaliers he must enlist against them men of a still stouter and higher spirit than their own. And he found them in the Puritans. For these were men who, with all their faults and defects, made it the chief end of their lives to know, serve, and enjoy God; men to whom England was dear, but the Kingdom of Heaven dearer still.

Our Lord views and judges earthly interests with an unmistakable aloofness, often mixed with gentle irony and expressed with kindly pity and a sort of delicate irony. 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?' The pomps and vanities of this world seem to Him childish. A wild flower is a much more beautiful object than a king or queen dressed up for a State function. How absurd, too, to hoard valuables which will probably be spoilt or stolen, and which in any case divert our attention from heavenly things. He almost laughs at the man who brings him a burning family grievance to settle.

3. Christ's Kingdom was not of this world; and yet this is the Divine paradox of Christianity: we cannot be saved by resolving to know nothing but God and our own souls. The introspective isolated life is emphatically not the Christian life. Our Lord's detachment from external things was combined with intense interest in the personalities of men and women. He could not go about without doing good. His whole life was one of free self-giving, of generous disinterested sacrifice. He came to show us that self-sacrifice is Divine; that the heart of God Himself beats to this rhythm. These two sides of His teaching never fly apart in the gospel itself, but all through the history of the Church they have done so continually. The contemplative hermit and the busy humanitarian are both half Christians, and yet much less than half, because each side is spoiled by its one-sidedness. And the two sides are held together by the teaching and the example of Christ. The proclamation of this gospel was the good news, because it makes the Christian more self-sufficing than the Stoic, without his hardness; more content with simple, natural pleasures than the Epicurean, without his propensity to shirk social duties; more of an idealist than Plato, although the better country of the Christian is not allowed to suck the importance and the meaning from the present life; a stricter moralist than the Jew, although the Second Table of the Law is briefly comprehended in this saying, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'[1]

It is true to say that those who have in the past cared most about the conditions of life here upon earth, cared most and wished most to make this world a better and happier place, have been the people who have drawn their hope and their inspiration from the heavenly world.

¶ Cecil Spring Rice, our Ambassador in Washington during the War, left a little poem of two verses which he wrote a month before he died. In the first verse he dedicates himself anew to the service of his country, and in the second he tells us the secret of that devotion.

I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love—
The love that asks no questions, the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

And there's another country I've heard of long ago,
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know.
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;

[1] W. R. Inge, in *Anglo-American Preaching*, 9.

And soul by soul, and silently, her shining
bounds increase;
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all
her paths are peace.

We are living in a time full of danger and difficulty, a time of transition in many ways. Let us give ourselves time to think, to pray. Let us ask God to show us what things are really valuable and worth striving for, and what things are not. Let us try hard and earnestly to make the eternal world real; and it never will be real unless we try hard to see it. The spiritual eye needs training and exercise as much as the bodily organ. Let us learn to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It must be wise and patriotic to lead a simple life, and it is a very great help to the knowledge of God. And let us remember that our Master came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Mr Bernard Shaw's definition of a gentleman is, one who puts in the common stock more than he takes out. And that is the way of the Cross.

Our Humiliation

Phil. iii. 21.—'Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory' (R.V.).

There is one word in the Authorized Version which jars on the spiritual ear. The Apostle wrote, not 'our vile body,' but 'the body of our humiliation.' He had no tinge of stoical contempt for flesh and blood. Yet he perceived the sensuous side of man to be the symbol and instrument of our low estate, whether living or dying. Through the body we lie exposed to the passions and sufferings and indignities of existence. And these physical conditions and necessities become of themselves 'our humiliation.' To St Paul's mind this stood apart from the question of personal sinfulness. The Apostle was no Manichæan. He never placed the essence of evil in man's material constitution. He recognized sin as resident in the will. And so he wrote, not 'the body of our guilt,' but 'the body of our humiliation.'

¶ When Archbishop Whately was dying, his chaplain read to him the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and then quoted the words from the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 20, 21): 'We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change *our vile body*,' etc. The dying man was pained, and asked for 'the right thing' to be read to him. The chaplain then repeated it again, with the rendering, with which we are now familiar in the Revised Version: 'Who shall fashion anew *the body of our humiliation*.' 'That is right,' said the Archbishop; 'there is nothing vile which God has made.'[1]

1. Now this way of looking at life is something distinctly Christian, unlike the Hebrew beatitude of well-being, still more unlike the Greek worship of physical beauty. And it is implied in the gospel rather than expressed. The complex constitution of man is one of those mysterious facts which Christianity takes for granted, without pausing fully to explain. The New Testament is occupied, not with the philosophy of human nature, but with its redemption. Yet what a piece of work is a man! What an amalgam of contradictions, what a medley of opposites—the paragon of animals, the quintessence of dust! Our purest affections are rooted in physical instincts. The senses themselves seem to connect us with a supersensual world. This strange dependence of spirit upon matter for its basis and its vehicle has been described as the deep, sacramental secret of our being. At any rate we may not put asunder in theory what God has so fearfully and wonderfully joined in life. Nevertheless it is true that man's bodily nature in its relation to his spiritual nature will always, in a greater or less degree, be found to be a house of bondage. To many Christian minds there appears something humbling about the very conditions of their lot on earth, as though the soul had not kept its first estate in God's bosom, but was made subject unto vanity by its birth into this material world. The New Testament, indeed, teaches no doctrine of pre-existence; yet the dreams of the mystics sometimes stray backwards to when they

. . . knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space.

And the Apostle himself writes as if he felt our bodily necessities to constitute in themselves a burden and a cross to the inner man.

[1] J. Flew, *Studies in Browning*, 84.

There are times and seasons when we wake up keenly to this aspect of earthly experience. We chafe and rebel against its indignities and contradictions, which baffle and sadden the soul. As one result of our bodily needs and appetites there follows our industrial routine. Men, who must eat to live, must work to eat. Improve the social order as we may, this world will remain a hard, stern place, a valley of humiliation for most of its inhabitants. We submit to our daily drudgery as a matter of course. We have no alternative. We have been drilled into it by the patient toil of a hundred generations. We even learn to say, 'Blessed be drudgery.' But sometimes, as we consider God's lilies, which toil not neither spin, and His birds, which have neither storehouse nor barn, the thought dawns upon us that to eat bread in the sweat of the brow is not the permanent destiny of sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

So also as regards the dark problem of our physical pains. We can trace little direct connection between a man's misdeeds and his sicknesses and sufferings. Disease and decay come upon the holiest saints, as surely as they visit the worst sinners. No optimist 'gospel of healthy-mindedness' can ever persuade us that we are not part of a groaning and travailing creation. We are made subject unto vanity against our will. And sooner or later the final humiliation lies in wait for us, one by one. As Pascal said: 'The last act is always tragedy: *on mourra seul*, we shall die alone.'

And even while we live, our bodies with their ignoble necessities, their often infirmities, enclose us like prisons in that they conceal their inmates. They cut us off from one another. Who has not mourned over the inadequacy of human expression? We gaze out wistfully through the windows of our isolation, we call and signal to each other across the severing spaces, but we cannot penetrate the barriers of personality to touch the real self who dwells captive there. Each of us must live his truest life in solitude, aloof and apart from his kind.

¶ How lonely we are in the world! You and your wife have pressed the same pillow for forty years and fancy yourselves united.—Psha, does she cry out when you have the gout, or do you lie awake when she has the toothache? . . . As for your wife—O philosophic reader, answer and say,—Do you tell *her* all? Ah, sir—a distinct universe walks about under your hat and under mine—all things in Nature are different to each—the woman we look at has not the same features, the dish we eat from has not the same taste to the one and the other—you and I are but a pair of infinite isolations, with some fellow-islands a little more or less near to us.[1]

The anomaly of human nature and human life grows distressing when we ponder it. Yet it would be fatal for us to forget it, or to treat it as though it were an illusion. The mistakes of the ascetic and the anchorite are trifling compared with the blindness of the secular, sensual man. The doom to dread is that we become subdued by our mortal environment—'tamed in earth's paddock, as her prize.' In *Little Dorrit* the horror and curse of long confinement arrived when the debtor had grown naturalized and acclimatized in his prison, and felt proud to be called 'the father of the Marshalsea.' These physical appetites and necessities of ours have, in themselves, nothing common or unclean. They possess no inherent evil. But in their quality and character they are of the earth, earthy. And man's supreme instinct is that which makes him always a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, encamped here, but never properly domesticated, because his heart and his treasure are otherwhere. The romance of literature is filled with pictures of strange humiliation. The banished duke keeping court on the greensward in Arden, the foundling princess bred up under a shepherd's roof in Bohemia, are like parables of the spirit of man in exile, waiting for the times of the restitution of all things when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

2. The gospel discloses the purpose and meaning of our humiliation. He who has made us what we are and has placed us where we are desires above all things that we learn humility. The first of His beatitudes belongs to the poor in spirit. So one main function of these physical necessities is to serve as a discipline for the soul, to wean us from self-pleasing, to subdue our self-will, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Let humiliation therefore have its perfect work. This is the road, strange and hard and unexpected, along which God brings His sons unto glory at last. This is the pathway which the

[1] Thackeray, *Pendennis*, i. 214.

Eternal Word has trodden. Christ explains our low estate by sharing it. He teaches us how we too must be made perfect through those very things which appear the signs and instruments of imperfection. The use and meaning of them all are to conform us to Himself.

'He shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory.' Such a mighty promise, from its very nature, must transcend our ideas and expectations as to its fulfilment. No human thought can imagine what is that transformation by which this corruptible shall inherit incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Yet the doctrine of the Resurrection, impossible though it be to express it in categories of time and sense, corresponds with the mysterious duality of human nature. The body is, after all, the home of the soul, endeared, even like the actual home, by the very sorrows that have been endured within it; and we can conceive of nothing entered upon in separation from it that is worthy to be called life. It hath not entered into our hearts to conceive what God shall fashion for them that love Him. It is enough that when that which is perfect is come, that which was in part shall be done away. All our purified powers and faculties will harmonize with their transfigured expression. By the influx of Christ's endless life the soul shall be endued with a symbol and instrument conformed to the glory of its Redeemer. Yet even then, looking back in remembrance, each saint will confess: 'It was good for me that I was humiliated.'

The Spiritual Body

Phil. iii. 21.—'Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory' (R.V.).

1. The doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body marks a very great advance upon doctrines of the immortality of the soul which were held before Christ came. The mere immortality of the soul as a shadowy unsubstantial thing is quite distinct from the doctrine of the immortality of man, body as well as soul, which is the revelation of the Christian faith. Christianity teaches that a life in the body awaits man hereafter, and that life beyond is not merely, as the Greeks used to think of it, a shivering recollection of the warmth and the brightness of days on earth, but a rich and full realization of a promise which is only dimly held out to us by the best that life can offer us here.

Man is soul *and* body: soul disciplined through body, soul expressing itself through body, soul completed through body. You can think of soul and body separately, but, as far as this world that we know is concerned, when you separate soul from body you have the end of man's association with this world and with his fellows. Man's body is the link with the world, and it is his means of communicating with the world. Destroy the body and impotence follows so far as the relations of life are concerned.

As a mere matter of inference from what we know to what we do not know, we may argue that if man is body and soul here, it is not unreasonable to hold that, if he is to be complete man hereafter, the completeness will once again involve association of his soul with a body, a body by means of which he may express himself, by means of which he may communicate, and by means of which he may learn. This inference is both suggested and confirmed by Christian teaching. St Paul tells us in our text that our Lord Jesus Christ shall change, or fashion anew, this body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed or made like to the body of His glory. That is to say, St Paul anticipates for those who are in Christ a life hereafter in the body in as real a sense as the life that we are now living is a life in the body.

¶ A human body is the necessary—is the only—method and condition, on earth, of spiritual personality. It is capable, indeed, of expressing spirit very badly; it is capable of belying it; indeed, it is hardly capable of expressing it quite perfectly; it is, in fact, almost always falling short of at least the ideal expression of it. And yet body is *the only* method of spiritual life; even as things are spirit is the true meaning of bodily life; and bodies are really vehicles and expressions of spirit; whilst the perfect ideal would certainly be, not spirit without body, but body which was the ideally perfect utterance of spirit.[1]

2. There can be no doubt that in connection with the doctrine of the Resurrection of the

[1] R. C. Moberly, *Problems and Principles*, 358.

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Body many people entertain very false notions —false to science, false to Christianity. Think of old burial customs, some of which aim at preserving the very body that died, in order that it may be ready to rise from its grave. Think of other practices, which aim at sealing the coffin or the tomb so lightly that no obstacle may be offered to the resuscitated corpse. And yet St Paul does not teach that these bodies of ours in which we are clothed at this moment are going to be raised from the grave. Probably the reason why so many people think that the very body which is buried will be raised is because the very body of the Lord Jesus Christ was raised on the third day. But the parallel between the case of our blessed Lord and of Christian people generally is very far from complete. Our Lord's resurrection was a bodily resurrection. But we do not know that the taking again of His crucified body was, so far as His own personal resurrection was concerned, a thing of necessity. He took again that body that lay in the tomb because a sign was needed, a sign which should put it beyond doubt for the disciples that He who had died had resumed life, had burst out from the grave and had put death under His feet. But the very nature of the appearances of our Lord in the risen state in those great forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension is clear enough evidence that it was the same body under conditions which enabled the disciples to recognize it, and yet raised above their complete comprehension. For His ascension seems to show that, as His risen body completed its work of convincing the senses of the necessary witnesses to the Resurrection itself, mortality was gradually, to use St Paul's phrase, 'swallowed up of life,' until it became in the fullest sense a spiritual body.

¶ The notion of a material identity between the present and the future bodies is one which ought to be far more emphatically repudiated by the Church than has hitherto been done; but that does not mean that there is no connection or continuity between them. That connection, however, clearly cannot consist in identity of material particles; for even in this life, so we are told, the material particles which constitute our bodies are completely replaced about once in every seven years. The principle of continuity and connection between my body of to-day and my body of twenty years ago is to be found, not in its material particles, but in the form-giving, body-building principle of life within, that is in the soul.[1]

When we look forward as Christians to our resurrection body, it is not our present bodies that are to be raised. Nevertheless these bodies that our spirit is associated with here have a very dominating effect upon the body that is to be hereafter. And why? Because according as body here is help or hindrance to the soul, according as body is soul's master or soul's servant, so through the body does soul write character upon itself. The body may have been laid in the grave and its particles may have been redistributed a thousand years, and yet the spirit that it once clothed may be receiving the things done in the body. For good and evil there is a very true resurrection of the body in the developing tendencies of the soul. But by resurrection of the body we mean something very much more than merely continuing influence. We mean that once again soul will be clothed in body, body that gives true outward expression to, and reflection of, the soul that lives within. And in this finding of bodily form the man who died will attain his immortality.

3. Our teaching in the details of the subject comes from St Paul, and it seems to be that at some point of time after death our spirit is once again enclosed in body. Whether that period of time is after long delay or after no delay at all we cannot say. It is open to us to believe that never at any time does the soul become completely disembodied. It is open to us to believe that at the very moment of death it exchanges the cast-off body of earth for a more spiritual body, if indeed the spiritual body may not be actually in existence during our life here and now as part of our personality. For St Paul writes: 'Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.' That may only be a reference to our spiritual development. On the other hand, it may point to St Paul's belief that our spiritual body is actually in existence for each one of us now.

As to the kind of thing this spiritual body is to be, two things may be said. First, it is not this present mortal body, though it stands in some close relation to it. Secondly, it bears

[1] B. H. Streeter, in *Immortality*, 113.

relation to the glorified body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1) The spiritual body is *not this present body*, though it bears some close relation to it. In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians St Paul makes use of the picture of sowing, and he says with unmistakable clearness: 'Thou foolish one, that which thou sowest is not raised except it die, and that which thou sowest thou sowest not that body that shall be.' In other words, we sow a grain, we reap an ear, a corn. Likewise we bury a corruptible body; but it is not a corruptible body that we look for as the harvest. Man's present body, wonderfully adapted as it is, is not an altogether faithful embodiment of man's spirit. Sometimes the keenest spirits are housed in bodies which from weakness or disease are a perpetual drag upon them. Or, conversely, a splendid body may be linked with a soul that is either dead or hardly born. But the body that shall be will be the equal yokefellow of the spirit. In appearance, in capacity, it will represent the spirit within. And it is of this more adequate body that St Paul writes: 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.'

(2) This new body *bears likeness to the glorified body of the risen and ascended Christ*, who is in some way the liberating agent in our change from mortal body to spiritual body. 'We know that when he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Likeness to Christ has to do with body as well as character, if not merely perfect goodness but glorified manhood is for ever the characteristic of the exalted Son of Man. Life in that new body will be the consummation of human life perfected through the living Christ.

4. Two further points in Paul's teaching may be considered.

(1) *We are to live in a body hereafter*; and that body will be what it is because of what we have done in our body here. There will be change, yet there will be continuity. Have we kept our body as a temple of the Holy Ghost? Then we are sowing the seed of a more perfect body of glory hereafter. On the other hand, is our body a thing of passions indulged? Then it may be we are making a body of glory impossible. In this body and through this body the soul determines itself here for hereafter, and every man shall in his own personality receive the things done in the body.

(2) *Life beyond is a life of persons.*—We shall be ourselves; we shall have form that manifests us as ourselves in our own personal identity, form that reflects the man or woman that we are with a truth and a clarity which were never possible for us in this earthly body. Surely this teaches us that there will be recognition in eternity. And since love abides, and since man would not be man without power to love and to be loved, we may believe to the full in the knitting up of severed friendships for those who attain to the resurrection of the dead and in their development beyond all that we have dreamed of on earth.

¶ There is a pretty little story told about the mother of the great Thomas à Becket. According to the story she was a Saracen maiden who fell in love with à Becket's father when he was campaigning with the Crusaders in Palestine. And when the Crusaders left, she, drawn by her great love, which was more to her than country or kindred, followed them in due course westward and found her way to London. And all she knew of England was the name of her beloved. So through London the strange maiden went, crying out, 'à Becket.' And in due course the beloved answered to his name.[1]

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet.

Unknown Soldiers of the Cross

Phil. iv. 2, 3.—'I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life' (R.V.).

In writing to his friends at Philippi, St Paul mentions the names of some friends who held high position in the Church there, or were dis-

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Lord of Life and Death*, 283.

tinguished by large endowments. He names, for example, two women of distinction—Euodia and Syntyche. He also names Clement, the Clement, possibly, who afterward became bishop of Rome. But among his fellow-labourers in that city there were many more whom he does not name; yet these modest and lowly friends are not forgotten or passed by. Though the Apostle cannot stay to name them, he speaks of them with strong and tender affection as 'other my fellow-labourers, *whose names are in the book of life*,' though they are not in this Epistle.

1. *The Register.*—'Whose names are in the book of life.' Whence did the Apostle derive this image of 'the book of life'; and what does it mean? Its origin is obscure. It has been supposed to embody many different references to ancient custom. Thus, for instance, victorious athletes who carried off prizes from the public games of Greece had their names honourably inscribed in the archives of their native city; and St Paul *may* have meant that his fellow-labourers in the service of Christ, whose citizenship was in heaven, had victoriously wrestled with the powers of darkness, and, as a reward of their prowess, had had their names emblazoned on the heavenly rolls. In Persia, again, the names of men who had rendered a signal service to the throne were written in the royal chronicle, with some brief record of their exploits: Mordecai's service, for example, in saving the king's life was recorded in the chronicle of Xerxes. And St Paul *may* have meant to suggest that the King of heaven kept a book in which the secret services of His subjects were recorded, in order that, in due time, He might reward them openly. But the more likely derivation is from the use of this phrase in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the figurative language of the Old Testament 'the book of life' is the register of the covenant people, of the true Israel. Those whose faith proved them to be sons of faithful Abraham were said to be 'written unto life.' Those who were unfaithful were said to be 'blotted out of the book of the living'; that is, they were self-excluded from the election and favour of God. During the Captivity, however, when the Jewish nation was divided and broken up, this phrase, 'the book of life,' came to have a higher sense: it came to mean the heavenly record of all who were destined to life and immortality. And throughout the New Testament it is employed in this higher sense. The Book of Life is the register of all the good, of all who in every nation have feared God and wrought righteousness, of all who have risen into life eternal by the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. St Paul uses it in this sense, whatever other allusions may, to his mind, have been latent in it. What he means to say to the Philippians is at least this—that his fellow-workers in the gospel, if unknown to earthly fame, were famous in heaven: undistinguished in the Church, or unrewarded by the world, they have been rewarded with life everlasting.

¶ In the mediæval age a famous document was known as *The Golden Book*, on account of its illuminated characters being so freely enriched with gold. But the book most befitting that designation rests on the throne of the Lamb, for it is the record that men in all ages have been feeling after in their dreams of fame, mostly blindly, falsely, yet their quest. The pyramids of Egypt, the sepulchres of the Appian Way, the monuments of the great cities, embody an aspiration whose satisfaction is found in this book of life. To be written therein is real fame; not 'a fancied life in others' breath,' but the possession of personal, conscious power and felicity. It is true fame; mingled with no tainted element. It is supreme fame; for our Lord taught us to rejoice more in this fact than in all other triumphs. It is everlasting fame; not the wonder of an age.

2. *The Record.*—We are often disappointed in famous men when through their biographies we become better acquainted with them. They do splendid things, write profound books, leave behind them magnificent monuments of genius and power, and we involuntarily do them homage; but, informed of their intimate life, we discover that they were vain, envious, selfish, intemperate, impossible, and much of the glory departs, as the splendid colours of butterflies disappear under the microscope. When, however, we are thus disenchanted it is a source of consolation to remember how many truly great characters remain unknown. It is conceded that the world knows not its greatest men, and certainly it is not less ignorant of its best. These are celebrated where they are best understood and justly judged. They did

great things, leaving them unblotted by a name. They remind us that 'the healing of the world is in its nameless saints.'

One reason why they pass unacknowledged arises naturally from their obscure status in the world. They belong to the dim, inarticulate multitude which constitutes the vast majority of mankind; and, being without rank, genius, or wealth they have little chance of distinction. A yet more potent cause of the overlooking of the saints is to be sought in themselves. True greatness of all kinds shrinks from publicity, and this is specially the case with eminence in character. Our Lord 'entered into a house, and would have no man know it,' and those most like Him are most pained by worldly glare. According to Balzac 'There are virtues so splendid that they necessitate obscurity; men make haste to hide them under a bushel.' There is much truth in this. A final explanation of the non-recognition of the saints may be found in the blindness of the spectators. The contemporaries of our Lord saw no beauty that they should desire Him. There is often so little of the Divine element in us that we see but faintly, or not at all, the fact and charm of rare loveliness of spirit and conduct, although challenged by it day by day.

Who can tell what we owe to those very men and women to whom St Paul refers, or to those others whom he mentions in the other Epistles, but whose names are all that is left to us? They may have been among the early missionaries of the Church, or they may have been the parents or teachers of missionaries who spread the gospel throughout the Roman Empire, or carried it, as it was so quickly carried, to the heathen hordes beyond. From them, with hardly a doubt, through hidden channels, flowing on from age to age and from land to land, come streams of good influence, for which our life and time are the better. And that is all the glory that a Christian should seek.

What tho' unmarked the happy workman toil,
And break, unthanked of man, the stubborn clod?
It is enough, for sacred is the soil,
Dear are the hills of God.

3. *The Recognition.*—St John calls this book of life '*the lamb's* book of life.' That 'the book of life' should be 'the lamb's book' is a fact, or a figure, full of encouragement for humble labourers in Christ's service whose names, though written in heaven, are unknown on earth. For the meek Lamb, shall He not remember the meek? He who humbled himself to manhood, to death, to the Cross, shall not He honour the humble? He who did not strive nor cry, nor make a noise in the streets, He who was dumb before the shearers and opened not His mouth when He was most oppressed, shall not He love and bless those who endure wrong patiently, and who labour on quietly and steadfastly at lowly tasks, although their labour wins no recognition or reward?

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of one unbroken thread
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpet, ring no bells,
The Book of Life the shining record tells.

The Apostle Paul often casts a glance at the future recompense, and he does so again in this passage. 'I beseech thee also, true yokefellow.' The figure is that of oxen yoked together in ploughing, difficult and often painful toil; and in thinking of the day of recognition the Apostle anticipates for himself and his associates the glory of the harvest in the life everlasting. What lies in that future we do not know, we cannot guess, but we wait and wonder and pray.

¶ All visitors to Florence look with delight on the great bronze doors of Ghiberti of which Dante wrote, longing in exile to behold once more his beloved St Giovanni, with its golden gates; for when they were first erected they were gilded, and must have shone with dazzling glory. The gold is all gone now, yet travellers are never tired of gazing on the wonderfully minute and delicately elaborate workmanship which they display. And we need not be surprised at their fascination since Michelangelo has said that they were fit for the gates of Paradise. Yet, magical as the exterior of heaven's gates may be, it is the other side that we long to see.

Joy

Phil. iv. 4.—'Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice' (R.V.).

To attain and preserve a deep satisfaction in life we must first believe in the goodness of God, and in His will to share with us His blessedness. Various kinds and degrees of happiness are possible without religious faith, but to realize true and abiding joy we must realize the goodness of God underlying all life, ordering it, satisfying it. There is much to justify such a faith. Nature often perplexes us, yet we cannot resist the fact that her fundamental thought is beneficent. Human nature testifies to the same fact. Pessimism has never been the popular creed. Oriental nations are supposed to hold it, yet we soon discover that the doctrine of the sadness and hopelessness of life is a theory of philosophers and poets, rather than the practical belief of the multitude. It is surprising that it should be so, considering the afflictions of the race and the general disposition to magnify our miseries; but our cheerfulness is constitutional and irrepressible. The instinctive optimism of the many prevails against the reasoned pessimism of the few.

Revelation agrees with the constitution of things. Schopenhauer flouts the Old Testament on account of its optimism; but 'the joy of the Lord' was the secret of Israel's solidarity and persistence, and the sad philosopher perceived how this fact told against his philosophy. Lawgiver, psalmist, and prophet alike give utterance to a radiant hope in God and in His goodwill to all His creatures. The New Testament is still more emphatic, assuring the struggling race of its call to conquest, glory, and peace. To 'rejoice in the Lord' is both the privilege and duty of the righteous. Who is so true a Christian as he who has learned what Kingsley calls 'the sacred duty of being happy.' The Fathers put *accidie*—the opposite to joy—among the seven deadly sins, because nothing more showed a mind wherein the light of God was baffled than cheerless gloom. Dante placed such sullen ones in the fifth circle of Hell together with the wrathful.

> We once were sad in the sweet air
> Which the bright sun makes gladsome with his beams,
> Carrying the sluggish smoke within us there:
> Now are we vexed in these black muddy streams.[1]

¶ Sir James Stephen writes to a friend: 'Saints who have mortified themselves to the quick are to be met with in every collection of ecclesiastical worthies. But how few who have enjoyed themselves to the utmost! How few elevated enough to believe that such joy would be acceptable to God!'[2]

How is this unfortunate fact to be explained, and how shall we best avoid this fault? It is of immense importance that our religion should make us personally happy, and that the Church of God should reflect and diffuse the eternal sunshine. The sadness of a saint breeds doubts as to the rationality of his faith. Every article of our creed proposes our happiness, and we do ourselves and our religion injustice by permitting and cherishing gloom and apprehensiveness.

Let us glance at some of the causes which result in that strange contradiction—a joyless Christian.

1. The *recollection of fault and failure* is not unusually the occasion of our unhappiness. We are accustomed to speak of the 'dead past'; but the past is often far from being dead; much to our grief it seems ever ready with a skeleton for the feast, a spectre for our pillow. We boast of rising 'on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things'; yet quite as often there is a reverse movement, and on those stepping-stones we descend to gloomy crypts of bitter regret, self-reproach, remorse, and something like despair. And with our remembrance of 'old sins' is the acute consciousness of fresh error and condemnation.

How slow we are to believe, really to believe, in the mercy of God! Is there a more striking proof of our moral imperfection than this hesitancy to believe in the freeness and richness of the Divine grace, although its Author has taken infinite pains to convince us of it? Some of the backward races are found utterly incapable of appreciating disinterested kindness; they construe it as disguised diplomacy, as a mark of mental weakness, or as an expression of fear. Knowing nothing themselves of magnanimous sentiment, they cannot understand it in others; they lack the sense that makes it intelligible.

[1] *Inferno*, vii. 121. [2] *Life and Letters*, 108.

Does not this fact cast light on our mistrust in the forgiveness of God? We seem incapable of entertaining the thought of His vast love, and it seems next to impossible for Him to overcome our incredulity. Instead of accepting His pardoning love as too great to be false, we act as if it were too great to be true. But if we believe in anything, we must surely believe that the love which rids us of our sin forgives it.

¶ In Wessex they have a queer word, 'Colepexy,' signifying the last apples left on a tree—out of reach, rather shrivelled, not worth bothering to fetch a ladder for. Too frequently our joy approximates the 'colepexy.' I wonder what has become of that overwhelming 'joy and peace in believing,' which the earliest believers experienced, some thirty-three years after the tidings of joy were proclaimed to all people. There isn't much sign of it nowadays on 'all people's' faces. . . . Yet, as John Donne put it: 'The true joy of a good soul in this world is the very joy of heaven: and we go thither, not that we might have joy infused into us, but that, as Christ says, our joy might be full.'[1]

The Holy Spirit came,
And darkness, sin and night
Gave place within this heart of mine
To holy joy and light.

Not as a passing guest,
Not at set times and tides,
The gracious Presence came to me—
It came and it abides.

2. Another cause is *temperament*. 'I never knew any one with such a gift for happiness as my mother has,' writes Leslie Stephen. Choice gift indeed! Whoever possesses it in any high degree needs few other gifts. Quick to discern the preciousness of all desirable things, equally alive to the compensatory aspects of painful experiences, and hopeful always for the best even when the outlook is far from clear, they who possess and wisely exercise this gift live lives full of wonder, gratitude, and praise. But all have not this gift. To the pessimistic and pensive all life takes a sober colour, leaves a more or less bitter taste.

¶ Victor Cherbuliez thus describes one of his characters: 'He lacked that lightness of humour which, of all things in the world, is the least easy to acquire. His gravity was inborn; he took everything seriously, his wine never sparkled.'

We must not, however, forget that disposition is subject to control and discipline; we may, perhaps, say that temperamental qualities are as amenable to culture as our mental faculties are. Vinet observes that 'the art of being happy was with Fontenelle a talent.' All should cultivate this art, and none more so than the grave spirits whose natural gift for happiness is not brilliant. Unfortunately those who are prone to self-analysis, doubtful of things, easily dejected, too often follow a course that confirms and intensifies their mood. They find ingenious reasons for excusing themselves, until in the end they come to believe that piety is 'divinest melancholy.' They do all the journey with the downcast look. Let us not forget for an hour that the contented temper, the heroic cheerfulness, the hopeful outlook constitute the Christian ideal; and for its realization let us strive and pray.

3. The joyousness of life is liable to suffer through *untoward circumstances*. Events fall out so unpropitiously that privation and pain seem to render the radiant mood impossible. When these trying days dawn, the Christian should remember that his peace and joy are not dependent on material affluence. In an early letter to a friend, Victor Hugo writes: 'I am eagerly awaiting the time which will settle my future, and enable me to live and be happy. So many material circumstances are often necessary for the realization of the purest and most ideal of dreams.' This is hardly the view of revelation. There we learn that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses, neither are they necessary to reach the purest and most exalted ideals.

As the peace of the soul is not dependent upon material resources, it is not banished by their curtailment or withdrawal. Much of the New Testament is devoted to the illustration of this truth. Indeed, the whole life of our Lord was an illustration of His teaching, that the highest life and the sublimest joy may be realized apart from happy circumstance. And every thoughtful reader of the gospel will be struck by the fact that as the Master's career

[1] May Byron.

passed into deeper darkness His joy seemed to increase. Would it not be our wisdom in sad days, instead of making our brain ache in attempting to solve the problems that first make our heart ache, to get closer to the Master and know His more intimate fellowship? He would reveal to us the secret of finding true peace at the centre of the whirlwind.

¶ I do not believe there lives on God's earth a man who has lived through more sorrow, shame, toil, danger and insult than I have. This I know, whatever tries other men, everything that had deadly power to try me came. For fifteen years, from thirty-three to forty-eight or fifty, I never knew real health, and had to work on in pain and weakness day by day. For thirty years the only thing I ever really longed for was *bed*. It sounds mean, I dare say it is mean, but it is true, and I wish to tell you the truth; whatever joy or sorrow came, the overwhelming sense of weariness and endless pain made bed, forgetfulness, the only human solace that satisfied. It is only in the last three years that I have begun to joy again in my waking life. Yet, strange contradiction to all this, I count myself blessed to have been allowed to live such a life. I felt the warrior joy of life and the conqueror's joy of getting the mastery. In my worst agony I could not pray to have it taken away, so utterly, by degrees, did I feel the power and light that came. And now all creation has opened out to me by living, and everything that I count happy I know to have come out of the self-mastery and training and truth which those years of anguish brought. My positive creed is an absolute unfaltering certainty of life triumphant.[1]

It is necessary to keep in mind the fact that Christian joy, the true, essential joy, is not to be confounded with the happiness of which the natural man speaks, and which is so largely based on material advantage. It is of another quality, possesses a more sovereign virtue, springs from a higher source. It is not contingent on natural conditions; they are determined by it. It sanctifies and enhances all sensuous pleasures, whilst existing apart from them and often blooming triumphantly in their absence. St Paul wrote from a prison, with the chain on his wrist, his daring, magnificent challenge, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, Rejoice.' He could not rejoice in himself—not in liberty, wealth, or fame—but he could now and always rejoice in the fellowship of his Lord and in His service.

[1] Edward Thring, Head Master of Uppingham.

The Christian Temper

Phil. iv. 5.—'Let your forbearance be known unto all men' (R.V.).

1. We are told in the correspondence of William I. and Bismarck that the king objected to the Prussian Note drawn up by his minister for presentation to Austria (1866) as too brusque and cold, and wished to modify it. Bismarck strongly deprecated any modification; but the king had his way. 'The few alterations I have made,' he wrote, 'do not soften down the gender, though they do soften the tone—*car le ton fait la musique.*' Yes, the tone, the temper makes the music; or, to change the figure, the temper makes the atmosphere. In a landscape objects hold really the same place, the same size and shape, the same relative position whether the atmosphere be dim or bright. But its aspect under cloud, or mist, or driving rain is very different from its aspect when the sun is shining out of a clear sky and suffusing all its features with a radiant smile or a gracious peace. Even so the objects we have in view, the principles which determine them, the methods we employ, the people we deal with may remain much the same, whatever be our temper. But it makes a world of difference, alike to ourselves and our outlook and our influence, whether our temper be calm and clear, or dark and passionate. So St Paul reminds us in his use of the word *epieikes* in the text, or its equivalent *epieikeia*. It is difficult to find one word in English that will give an adequate rendering of the Greek. In the Authorized Version we have 'moderation,' and in the Revised Version 'forbearance,' with 'gentleness' in the margin. But on the whole, as Professor Mayor points out, two things are clear from the history of the word: one is that it never lost hold of its root *eikos*, which means what is likely, fit, reasonable; the other is, that its later meaning was influenced by the idea of a connection with *eiko* —'to yield.' Hence its prevalent sense came to imply a double significance; on the one

hand, the fair-minded, reasonable man; on the other, 'one who does not stand on his rights, but is ready to give way to the wishes of others.'

Emphasizing the former aspect, Plato constantly uses the word of respectable, well-behaved people, as opposed to those who are rude and violent, and who try to carry things by force of passion and clamour. He uses it also of the man who is *metrios*, who endeavours to govern his judgment, speech, and action by reference to the golden mean. And then, by a characteristic transition, it comes to mean for him the good man in contradistinction to the merely just. But the most penetrating analysis of the word is given by Aristotle. He speaks of it as denoting something better than justice, something which rectifies the written law and shows an indulgent consideration of human accidents and infirmities. And he closes his analysis in these striking words: 'It is *epieikeia* to pardon human failings and to look to the law-giver, not to the law; to the spirit and not to the letter; to the intention, not to the action; to the whole, and not to the part; to the character of the actor in the long run, and not in the present moment; to remember good rather than evil, and good that one has received rather than good one has done; to bear being injured; to wish to settle a matter by words rather than by deeds.'

2. We shall agree with the late Bishop Creighton that we have here the description of a splendidly human virtue. It is:

> The soul of law,
> The life of justice, and the spirit of right.

It is this even in the wise Greek moralist; and it cannot be less in the New Testament. It is, in fact, this and more. For in the New Testament the two elements of meaning derived from its earlier and later source seem completely to blend. Its possessor, that is to say, is not only fair and reasonable, but is also, because inspired by Christian love, disposed to waive his personal rights, to suppress his personal wishes, and to yield all he can. He cannot, indeed, yield beyond the clear claims of reason and equity; and this secures him against moral weakness. But within these ample limits he yields cheerfully, courteously, and generously. Thus the Aristotelian virtue becomes a spiritual grace; becomes—to quote Matthew Arnold's happy phrase—'sweet reasonableness.'

The man who is forbearing in the sense in which forbearance is here urged will be gentle, kind, considerate. He will not magnify trifles, and make a stand on insignificant points, and lay down the hard and fast rule that anybody who wants his aid, or who is to work with him, must come to his terms and fall in with his ideas; but many things which seem to him to be wise both in aim and method, or which are really his due, he will readily forgo. He will illustrate, in some degree at least, the lofty measure of self-abnegation and sweetness which is brought out when love sways the soul and controls action. 'Love suffereth long, and is kind; . . . seeketh not her own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil, . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.' This is forbearance, and forbearance in its perfect manifestation.

¶ It was said of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that his whole life was bathed in sympathy, the love that suffers long and envies not, which forgives unto seventy times seven. This gentleness of character left its mark upon his most expressive face. Charles Kingsley said it was the most beautiful human face he had ever seen. He was gentle to those who injured him, and most forgiving. Edgar Allan Poe, whose great genius could not lighten the dark places of his morbid nature, accused Longfellow of plagiarism and utter want of originality. Longfellow's reply to his tirade of abuse was to lecture to his class at Harvard upon the rich poetic genius of Poe and the marvellous music of his poems. It was the only reply his heart could give. Like our own great Cranmer, to injure him was the surest way to secure his goodwill. Tennyson puts upon the lips of Thirlby, in *Queen Mary*, this splendid tribute to Cranmer:

> To do him any wrong was to beget
> A kindness from him, for his heart was rich,
> Of such fine mould, that if you sow'd therein
> The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

¶ Is there anything in the biography of F. D. Maurice more impressive than the transfiguring effect upon his character of these two convic-

tions—that there was always some truth in what his opponent advanced, however, to his mind, it might be overgrown with error; and that there was always likely to be something in his own opinions, or in his mode of presenting them, or in himself, which might be erroneous or wrong? Hence his constant desire to discover the truth on their side and to do it justice; and, at the same time, to discover, confess, and cast away the wrong or falsehood on his own part.

3. We are to let our 'gentleness,' our 'forbearance,' be known unto all men. It is not an easy task; there was a time when no man counted it a needful one. In nothing, perhaps, did the new religion of the first century clash more violently with the current maxims and ideals than in its steady, unflinching inculcation of the spirit of the Beatitudes. To be strong, to be self-assertive, to stand up for one's own—no man in the world into which Christ was born, who wished to retain his own self-respect or the respect of his fellows, could afford to fail here. And the pagan in us all dies hard, so that even Christian men and women are often tempted to be satisfied with the old ideals of duty rather than follow the example and teaching of Jesus which have supplanted them. How difficult do we find it to abate our claims, to be magnanimous, to forgive and forget, how difficult sometimes even to believe that it is our duty to do any of these things! Yet it is to the daily manifestation of this gentle, forbearing temper that we are called, alike by the example of Christ, and by all the dealings of God with our own souls.

¶ In the life of Hudson Taylor there is a story of how a Chinese carrier decamped when the missionary was in difficulties, taking with him his furniture, books, and money. After prayer and consideration Hudson Taylor decided not to seek legal remedy. He just wrote the carrier, pointing out the seriousness of the offence, showing that certain things like Christian books were absolutely useless to him, and asking that at any rate he would return these. As Taylor felt himself responsible to his supporters at home he reported this action. The story came to the knowledge of George Müller and he was so struck by this reproduction of primitive Christianity that he became one of Hudson Taylor's most enthusiastic supporters.

When we think of 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ,' with what patience and forbearance He bore Himself in the midst of faithless friends and angry foes; when we consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, and who yet, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously—then, if there be any obligation on a Christian to be Christ-like, we also are called to let our forbearance be known unto all men. And, further, as Bishop Paget says, it would help most of us to grow in patience and charity and justice if now and then we were quietly to recall the forbearance we ourselves have needed and received in our past lives. 'Above all, let us think and think again (however far our thoughts may stay beneath the truth) of the forbearance of Almighty God; provoked by all our pride and stubbornness, our meanness and ingratitude, our hardness and neglect and worldliness and self-indulgence; provoked by our broken promises and our waste of all His gifts; provoked it may be, year after year, as far as our memory can reach; yet still—oh, wonder of redeeming love!—still ready to receive us, still calling us to repentance and peace.'[1]

Prayer

Phil. iv. 6.—'In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.'

Prayer is a necessity of every true life. And as every man has been placed by God in a twofold relationship—as an individual and as a member of a community—and as on the one hand no man can realize aright his personal, individual life unless he bears a true part in the life of the community; and, on the other, cannot be true to the community unless he is first of all faithful in his personal life: so the man who is striving to be true in both relations will give himself to private and public prayer. No life can attain its best that omits either. It is obvious that prayer as a function of the personal and public life must have its fixed times in private and in public. But even independently of this fact, prayer should not be left to become a mere matter of our passing

[1] *Studies in the Christian Character*, 185.

moods, the creature of our inclinations or disinclinations. In fact, we need prayer most of all, and can least of all dispense with it, when we feel our need of it least.

1. *The Object of Prayer.*—The object of prayer is not to alter God's will and bend it to ours, but to bring our will into harmony with God's will. God has a plan for every man's life—a noble and Divine plan—and that plan can be fulfilled only by the due shaping of our life according to God's will. And for the due shaping of our life according to God's will we need spiritual and temporal blessings.

For spiritual blessings we pray to the Father without any reservation whatever. We pray for likeness to Himself, for forgiveness and the spirit of forgivingness, for restoration, for purity, for truth, for patience, for self-mastery, for openness of heart, for good influence, for love going forth in sacrifice, and thought ripening in character. And we know that when we ask these spiritual blessings we shall receive them, for they are God's own will for us at all times, and personal communion with God is the direct channel through which they flow to us.

As for temporal blessings, we can pray for these also—but conditionally. We must always ask for them subject to God's will. We cannot, indeed, doubt for a moment God's willingness to bless us therein if we are fit to be blessed. He alone knows whether such external blessings are good for us or not. But of this we are assured—that if such blessings are withheld from us, they are withheld only because our highest well-being will be furthered by our poverty and want, rather than by our wealth and fullness. Accordingly, to all our prayers for things temporal we attach the words of trustful submission, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'

¶ After this our Lord showed me concerning Prayer. I saw two conditions needful in them that pray, according to that I have felt in myself.

One is, they will not pray for anything that may be, but that thing that is God's will and His worship.

Another is, that they set them mightily and continually to beseech that thing that is His will and His worship.[1]

[1] Lady Julian, *Comfortable Words for Christ's Lovers*, 96.

The dear God hears and pities all;
He knoweth all our wants;
And what we blindly ask of Him
His love withholds or grants.

And so I sometimes think our prayers
Might well be merged in one;
And nest and perch and hearth and church
Repeat 'Thy will be done.'[1]

2. *The Conditions of Prayer.*—From the object of prayer we pass naturally to its conditions, and the first condition is earnestness. When once we recognize prayer as a stated function in our personal and social life, we must be in earnest, else this spiritual office will become an empty ceremonial, a mere commemoration of what God was to us or others in the past, instead of a living communion face to face in the present. How many, moreover, are praying for what they really do not want, or even think of! How many attend for the sake of example to others, and extend the patronage of their presence to the worship of the Most High! All such attendance at public worship for the sake of example to others is based on false pretences. We all need God, need Him unutterably, more than we know or ever shall know here, and our presence at public worship is a confession of our need. Let us, therefore, be in earnest. Our faithlessness does not confine its paralysing influence to ourselves, but is hurting other souls around us; as, on the other hand, the spiritual earnestness of our worship is helping other hearts to a higher communion with God.

The prayer that God grants must be the expression of the chief desire of the heart, and not one merely amid a crowd of things competing for a man's allegiance. If the wish for the Divine life is to be fulfilled, it must be the foremost wish of the heart. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.' And if it is the foremost, its satisfaction is certain and inevitable. 'Seek, and ye shall find.' But no promise is held out to the divided heart, or to disjointed or isolated requests uttered once in a way and alien to the customary habit and tone of life. There is some truth in the statement that 'we needs must love the highest when we see it,' but then this compulsion does not necessarily lead to effort, and we cannot attain to the

[1] Whittier, *The Common Question.*

highest save through earnest effort. If, then, we fail to become true, if we fail to become pure, if we fail to overcome our distractions, our vanities, our resentments—if, in short, we fail to become in some slight measure Christ-like, it is because we are without the will to become so.

¶ It is productive of much mischief to try to make people believe that the life of prayer is easy. In reality there is nothing quite so difficult as strong prayer, nothing so worthy of the attention and the exercise of all the fine parts of a great manhood. On the other hand, there is no man who is not equal to the task. So splendid has this human nature of ours become through the Incarnation that it can bear any strain and meet any demand that God sees fit to put upon it. Some duties are individual and special, and there is exemption from them for the many, but there is never any absolution from a duty for which a man has a capacity. There is one universal society, the Church, for which all are eligible, and with which all are bound to unite; there is one universal book, the Bible, which all can understand, and which it is the duty of all to read; there is one universal art, prayer, in which all may become well skilled and to the acquirement of which all must bend their energies.[1]

But earnestness is not the only condition. There are not a few people nowadays who believe in no personal God, and yet give themselves earnestly to prayer from the belief that prayer exercises a beneficial reflex influence upon them. But prayer is not an attempt of the mind to operate upon itself by expressing the thought and personating the desires of devotion. It is not an effort to cleanse and uplift ourselves to self-knowledge through inspiring confession or the agonies of repentance. Such experiences are not prayer, though they may render it mighty service. They cannot in themselves deliver us from the burden of guilt; they cannot soothe our sorrows, lift our hearts into peace, and endow them with calm restfulness and imperishable resolve. Hence the second condition of true prayer is that we do not address ourselves to the empty air, to some illusion of our own making. Prayer in its essence is the direct and personal communion of the spirit of man with God, a communion as real as the daily intercourse of man with man, but infinitely closer. In such communion we meet face to face with our Lord, and over the tumult of our distractions, the bitter consciousness of repeated failure in our struggle against our spiritual foes, in our longings after holiness, He breathes the benediction of His peace, and enfolds us in the restful, life-giving consciousness of His presence. In such worship words may or may not be spoken, yet therein our sins are swept away, our hearts quickened with fresh light and strength and love, and our spirits filled with the peace that passeth understanding.

Such, then, being the end of prayer, it is our duty not to engage in it heedlessly. Prayer demands a reverence of approach, a solemnness of spirit, a consciousness of the great Presence before whom we kneel. Accordingly, we must guard against falling into the habit of merely saying our prayers. Many prayers are addressed from a formal sense of duty, or force of habit, to no distinctly conceived Being, proceeding not from the depths of the heart, but from the machinery of habit or the constraint of custom. Such saying of prayer, without the attempt to realize the immediate presence of God, falls short of the essence of prayer.

¶ If I try to pray I must make an effort to realize the presence, the nearness, the accessibleness, of the Most High God. A necessity is laid upon me, and for a little while at least I must deal with spiritual things. If I would pray, I must break some of the fetters that bind me, must dash out of the narrow confines of sense into the world of changeless reality, out of the confused region of seeming into that of being.[1]

3. *The Services of Prayer.*—The first and greatest service of prayer, from which all others flow, is that, in such communion, our hearts come under the immediate influence of His Spirit, and are open to receive His inspirations. It is God that suggests the highest thought and the unselfish purpose, that inspires the merciful act, the kindling of generous feelings, that awakes the hunger for righteousness and the thirst for the living God that He alone can satisfy. It is, therefore, in the Pauline words, ours to work out in life these inspirations that, in such high communion, our God works in us. For such inspirations to truth and mercy and

[1] Bishop Brent, *With God in the World*, 1.

[1] H. R. Reynolds, *The Philosophy of Prayer*, 14.

love and righteousness are likewise the requisitions of corresponding duties, and these duties, which in lower moods wholly fail to appeal to us, we, in the clearer vision of such a Presence, recognize as parts of the Divine obligation.

Such communion with our God also brings to light our weakness, our cowardice of spirit and half-heartedness of devotion, and a shrinking from the cross our Lord has laid upon us. And yet if we continue instant in prayer, despite our natural reluctance and fears, we present ourselves as ready for His completed will. Then our weakness will be swept away by the inflowing tides of His almightiness into our hearts that tremble in the presence of some stern call of duty or sacrifice, and we shall be unruffled when the moment for such sacrifice arrives.

We kneel—how weak! We rise—how full of power!
Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That ever we are overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?

The Remedy for Care

Phil. iv. 6, 7.—'Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

1. 'Be careful for nothing.' The Apostle's exhortation is surprising, for if there is anything that experience makes certain it is that care is inevitable. Yet our Lord gives the same counsel in the very same words when He says, 'Take no thought for the morrow.' The Philippians had the same reasons for anxiety and carefulness that men have had in all generations, and have still. At the time when St Paul writes they had even more than the common grounds of apprehension. They were exposed to persecution, in which they might lose, at least, their goods and their liberty; and all that harasses men till this day—anxiety about the future, dread of want, doubtful health, the lack of prospects for those dependent on them—would have its home among them as well as among us. It is impossible not to think of such things; in a sense, they are responsibilities for which it is our duty to provide: yet the Apostle says, 'Be careful for nothing.' In the Revised Version it is, 'In nothing be anxious,' and that helps to explain the energy of the advice. Prudence is every man's duty, and the imprudent will not be relieved by prayer of the consequences of his folly; but anxiety is the great foe of prudence. It is, in the working of the mind, what friction is in the working of a machine—a distinct diminution of its effectiveness.

Our Lord applies this advice, 'Take no thought' to one particular situation, which helps us to appreciate its true meaning. 'When they deliver you up,' he says to His Apostles, 'take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak.' It is as if He had said to them, 'Your duty, which is the will of God for you, is always in the present moment. The providence of your heavenly Father may lead you into positions of great difficulty and peril; but it will be your wisdom to take these as they come, not wearing yourselves out with anxiety while they are still remote, but believing that when the emergency is upon you, God will make you equal to it.' That wise and compassionate word of our Lord can have its application greatly extended. Every one of us has anticipated and prepared for trouble that never came to pass. Every one of us has laid plans with anxious care to meet emergencies which did indeed arrive, but which had to be dealt with in a different way. Apart from faith in God altogether, there is much needless unhappiness due to anticipating the future. Sir George Cornwall Lewes had a great deal to say for his opinion that prevention was not better than cure. If we were omniscient, and knew what to prevent, the common proverb might be true; but in our nervousness and anxiety we waste time, strength, and peace of mind in preventing ninety-nine things which were never going to happen, and, as likely as not, overlook the one that does happen, and has to be cured after all. But it is not this politic shrewdness, husbanding its resources and confident in its own presence of mind, that is the Apostle's cure for care. The contrast in

his mind is that of man's prudence with its wearing anxieties, and faith in the providence of God. The same contrast is disguised in the words of Peter, which our Bible renders 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' Peter does not repeat 'care' as if the same painful thought were right in God which is wrong in us; he uses two different words, as if one should say, 'Casting all your anxiety upon God, for He has an interest in you which makes anxiety unnecessary.'

¶ The crosses which we make for ourselves by over-anxiety as to the future are not heaven-sent crosses. We tempt God by our false wisdom, seeking to forestall His arrangements and struggling to supplement His Providence by our own provisions. The fruit of our wisdom is always bitter. God suffers it to be so, that we may be discomfited when we forsake His Fatherly guidance. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'—and the evil of each day becomes good if we leave it to God.[1]

2. Let us consider this alternative to care. 'In everything . . . let your requests be made known to God.' There is to be an unreserved confiding in God. We must not overlook 'in everything.' God has made us—He knows our nature; He knows the course of our life and all its circumstances. There is not any anxiety into which our Creator cannot enter, and therefore none is to be hidden from Him. God's eye is on every man's business; He sees his difficulties, his probable losses, his anxieties, his struggles, his dread of certain contingencies over which he has no control, and in regard to these He says: Be not anxious, but confide in Me. And so it is with the minor anxieties and distractions of life. God is great enough to care for the least things as well as for the greatest. The wonders that the microscope reveal are as much His work, and the objects of His universal Providence, as those of the telescope; and we limit His goodness and faithfulness when we withdraw from Him even the least of our cares. Nothing that has a right to a place in our life can embarrass us when we come before God. No matter what part of life it touch—be it domestic or public, temporal or spiritual, personal or disinterested—if it be a real care, it can be the subject of a real confidence in Him. We can ask Him to take the responsibility of it for us, and to grant us His peace as we trust in His Providence.

¶ The first Earl Cairns, who became Lord Chancellor and leader of the Conservatives in the Upper House, was noted for the calm way in which he bore the burdens of State. Worries and anxieties seemed always to sit lightly upon him, and men sometimes wondered why he was so little moved or disturbed by them. He entered the Council Chamber one day after his friends had been discussing him. One of them asked him what was the secret of it all, hardly expecting, perhaps, to be taken seriously. Lord Cairns answered quite frankly and simply: 'Every morning I lay before God, as my Heavenly Father, the plans and cares I have in my mind. I ask Him for His help and guidance, and there I leave them. Having done so, why should I be anxious or worry about anything?'[1]

The Apostle notes one element which will never be absent from the Christian prayer, namely, thanksgiving. 'In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' The Christian can always do this with a good conscience. At the bottom of his heart, beneath all the chance and change of outward circumstances, unaffected by anxiety and alarm, he has the deep and abiding consciousness of redemption. This is the unchangeable blue sky behind all the clouds, black or grey. Even the trials of life, its pains, its sorrows, its alarms, its losses, its disappointments, must hide a purpose of love; it cannot be otherwise, since God has loved us with an everlasting love; 'we *know* that all things work together for good to them that love God.' Hence no Christian prayer, in whatever stress of trial it be presented, will lack the element of thanksgiving. For it is prayer in the name of Jesus, and when that name is once spoken, when the music of it is heard in the heart, what abounding gratitude it calls forth! It is the symbol of that mighty love in which we live and move and have our being as redeemed men and women, and when we realize this as we should, thanksgiving will be as the very air we breathe.

The bridegroom may forget the bride
  Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
  That on his head an hour has been;

[1] Fénelon, *Letters to Women.*

[1] J. W. W. Moeran.

The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me![1]

¶ Care and prayer, an old commentator says, fight with each other like fire and water; but should not prayer prevail, when he who prays can look up to Jesus Christ, who died for him, and feel sure in his heart of hearts that all his life is ordered by Him?

¶ 'Nothing so pleases God in connection with our prayer as our praise,' once wrote the Rev. Henry Frost, director for North America of the China Inland Mission, 'and nothing so blesses the man who prays as the praise he offers. I got a great blessing once in China in this connection. I had received bad and sad news from home, and deep shadows had covered my soul. I prayed, but the darkness did not vanish. I summoned myself to endure, but the darkness only deepened. Just then I went to an inland station and saw on a wall of the Mission home these words: "Try Thanksgiving." I did, and in a moment every shadow was gone, not to return.'[2]

3. Let us look now at the result of this approach to God. If we follow the Apostle's advice to be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make our requests known unto God, then, he says, the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus. In other words, prayer can do for us what care cannot do. We are not told that our requests will be granted; it may or may not be that we should get what we think for our good, but the result is quite independent of the granting or refusing of our particular petitions. Even if we got everything we asked we might be far enough from an assured calm and happy heart; and it is this that God promises to give us. The peace of God is the peace which He gives; the peace which comes to the heart that has made God the Redeemer its confidant, and so has recovered that deep rest in His counsel and love which it had lost and of which no prudent forethought or anxious care of its own could supply the place. It is the peace which Christ bequeathed with such solemnity to His disciples on the last evening of His life.

¶ Christ's life outwardly was one of the most troubled lives that was ever lived: tempest and tumult, tumult and tempest, the waves breaking over it all the time till the worn body was laid in the grave. But the inner life was a sea of glass. The great calm was always there. At any moment you might have gone to Him and found rest. And even when the blood-hounds were dogging Him in the streets of Jerusalem, He turned to His disciples and offered them, as a last legacy, 'My peace.' Nothing ever for a moment broke the serenity of Christ's life on earth.[1]

'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding.' What the Apostle intends to express is that the peace of God surpasses every device that man's wit can contrive for giving quietness and assurance to the heart. Now the object of all anxiety is to insure one against unpleasant and disturbing possibilities. By every kind of prudence and management we seek to entrench ourselves beyond the assaults of fortune; we guard one line of defence by another, investing something here, and having something else in reserve there, and we do not see till the enemy is upon us that, so far as having a quiet heart goes, every new security we take from the world is a new hostage that the world holds against us. Now, what the Apostle says in this place is that he knows an infinitely simpler and more effective security against anxiety than any which is thus contrived. It is the peace of God. He speaks with animation and picturesquesness of this blessed peace. It shall keep, he writes, your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. 'Keep' is a military word in Greek, although it has no such association in English, and peace is represented as doing a soldier's duties. It would sound to the Philippians as if Paul had written, 'The peace of God shall stand sentry over your hearts, to challenge every approach of care.' The security contemplated is absolute, the sleepless peace of God keeps watch at the gate, and no alarm can disquiet the soul.

My times are in Thy hand:
My God, I wish them there;

[1] Burns, *Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn.*
[2] W. J. Hart.

[1] Henry Drummond.

My life, my friends, my soul I leave
Entirely to Thy care.
. . . . .
My times are in Thy hand,
Jesus, the Crucified;
Those hands my cruel sins had pierced
Are now my guard and guide.[1]

The Peace of God

Phil. iv. 7.—'And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

The Church has turned this great promise into a prayer and embodied the words of it in that benediction which we know so well. All through the Christian centuries that beautiful invocation of peace has been heard. It closes all our highest acts of worship.

We stand to bless Thee e'er our worship cease,
Then, lowly kneeling, wait Thy word of peace.

But, familiar as the benediction is, do we realize its meaning? Do we indeed know what the peace of God is, and how it passes all understanding? Do we know what it is to have that peace keeping, or rather, as St Paul's word signifies, 'mounting guard' over our hearts and minds?

¶ A successful headmistress of to-day in her recently published Autobiography writes of one of her pupils: 'When I looked at Alice, I realized what Browning had in mind when he described the girl-wife in *The Ring and the Book* as "little Pompilia with the patient brow." A patient brow is not at all the same thing as a serene brow such as Raphael gave to his Madonnas. The latter is significant of the "peace that passeth understanding"; the former of submission to the inevitable.'[2]

1. What, then, is the peace of God? St Paul was certainly using no vague phrase when he spoke of such a peace. It stood for something which he knew well. He had made trial of its power to guard. Can we doubt that for him, no less than for those colleagues of his, the peace of God was the peace which Christ bequeathed to His chosen ones on the eve of His passion? Here was the precious legacy which was to pass on in an unending river to all believers. It was the perpetuation of the calm that reigned in the heart of Christ on that never-to-be-forgotten night when, with the shame and anguish of the Cross full in view, and that worse anguish of the great conflict in the garden close at hand, He had said, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' 'Not as the world giveth.' The hollowness of all substitutes for the peace of God would seem to have been in the mind of St Paul when he dictated the text, for the original of the words 'which passeth all understanding' may be rendered 'which surpasses every device or counsel.' It excels every contrivance of man. All attempts to procure peace apart from Christ are unsatisfying and vain.

One such substitute some of those Philippians must have known well. While our Lord was on earth, and for generations after, the noblest spirits of the pagan world were sustaining a philosophy, the sole aim of which was to do what He undertook to do, namely, to make man independent in the depth of his being of the changes and chances of this world. At the time St Paul was carrying the good news of God through the Roman Empire, a teacher was living who left behind him an illustrious name. Seneca was even then reaching the zenith of his fame, and he had an offer to make which was strangely like that of Jesus Christ. He said to his disciples, 'Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' He taught himself and he taught others to aspire to a philosophy—calm, moral, unwavering—a stern apathy proof against every joy and sorrow of public and private life, and which not even the spectacle of moral evil was to be permitted to ruffle. And a far nobler Stoic at a later day, the great Emperor whose meditations may be called the holiest book in pagan literature, has left us the most pathetic record of his own struggles to attain the peace which the world cannot give, and to attain it by sheer faith in the beauty and self-sufficiency of human virtue.

Or, we may think of another famous and well-tried device, older far than Stoicism, and not, like it, an extinct philosophy, but at this hour the creed of a vast proportion of the human race. Buddhism is a religion which has for its proposed goal and consummation a peace which the world cannot give. The

[1] W. F. Lloyd. [2] *Fire Kindleth Fire*, 6.

haven to which it points its votaries, after training them through this life by gradual extirpation of all desire, is deliverance into an undimmed repose—a repose which we cannot distinguish from annihilation, which involves the destruction of personality, the utter and final loss of self-consciousness.

¶ The Buddhist writings tell us such things as these: 'To him who has finished the path and passed beyond sorrow, who has freed himself on every side, and thrown away all fetters, there is no more fever of grief.' 'Such an one remains like the broad earth, unvexed; like the pillar of the city gate, unmoved; like a pellucid lake, unruffled.' 'Tranquil is the mind, tranquil the words and the deeds, of him who is thus set at rest and made free by wisdom.' 'The heart, scrupulously avoiding all idle dissipation, diligently applying itself to the holy law of Buddha, letting go all lust, and consequent disappointment, fixed and unchangeable, enters on Nirvana.'

Never shall yearnings torture him, nor sins
  Stain him, nor ache of earthly joys and woes
Invade his safe eternal peace; nor deaths
  And lives recur. He goes
Unto Nirvana. He is one with life,
  Yet lives not. He is blest, ceasing to be.
Om, mani padme, om! the dewdrop slips
  Into the shining sea!

2. Do we know what the peace of God is in contrast with this and all other devices evolved by man?

(1) Its superiority consists in *its universality*. It is a peace offered to all and obtainable by all. The peace of Stoicism was assuredly not for all. It was the perquisite of the philosophic few; it was for those rare spirits who could perceive and pursue a high ideal, who could conquer all weakness and rise to self-mastery. It was hopelessly out of the reach of the multitude; it was impossible to ordinary souls; it had no power to lift them above the temptations of sense or to shield them from the arrows of fortune. And so, too, noble as it is in idea, Buddhism proves in practice the most inoperative of faiths. It has no power to raise the many out of their degradation. Its teaching seems but one long scornful wail over the vanity of this world and the misery of human existence, and it leaves men without a hope and without God to face the sorrow and struggles which, unless interpreted by the thought of His love, are a mystery too cruel, a burden too heavy for our poor hearts to bear.

(2) The peace of God surpasses all other, for this reason—that it has in it a Divine element, it springs out of the living spirit of *the love of duty*. It is that which Christ spoke of as His peace, the natural reflection of an entire surrender to the will of God. His peace was perfect because His obedience was unmarred; it was fed every moment by a trust which never faltered. The gospel invites us to this peace, which comes of sure faith in a presiding love, and of the sacrifice of our human wills to the holy will of the Father in heaven. This is what breathes into the soul a restful life beyond all other life. It involves no false ignoring of the facts of our earthly lot, but all who have experienced it must have felt consolation and realized strength. And it is a gift which we can only derive from the very heart and life of Christ Himself—when we abide in Him, and He abides in us.

¶ John Reid, the famous anatomist and physiologist, when he was attacked by an incurable disease, was sent to Keswick with the hope that rest among the hills with no one to speak to might stay its progress. When there he wrote to his wife: 'In my lonely state I have felt that the scientific honours I have been so anxious to obtain are but as dross compared with that enduring peace of mind arising from a full dependence upon God and faith in His son Jesus Christ.' And his biographer tells how, during the following years when pain was his close companion, his face was always lit with peace and joy like that which fills a household when a beloved and honoured guest is within it.

3. It may safely be said that the principal measure of a man's moral state and value is to be found in the kind of peace on which he has set his heart; for the pursuit of peace is universal. Christ knew that He was addressing Himself to a universal longing of the human heart when He said: 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' Rest and peace in some form we are all of us seeking; and Christ saw that the secret of our misery is the infatuated endeavour to find rest in the things which can never give it. What were all these cautions of

His against the world—these repeated assertions of the impossibility of combining the love of the world with the love of God? They show us clearly how well He knew that, left to ourselves, we spend our money for that which is not bread and our labour for that which satisfies not. He has drawn for us to the life the picture of a man who covets the most obvious and vulgar peace which the world gives—the peace of prosperity and external ease. The world, assuredly, has its promise of peace for those who will serve it well. He who is bent on finding his portion in this life may find it in many forms, and be long ere he discovers the hollowness of his possession. For the world makes its appeal not only to the sensual and the ease-loving; it offers peace not only to the fool, but to the cultured and the thoughtful; it has its lure for every taste and craving, its prize for every phase of ambition. To the diligent it holds out the fruits of industry; for the careful it heaps up wealth; to the student it promises the knowledge which is power; to the bold and adventurous it offers the delight of fame and respect and wide influence. It is foolish to speak contemptuously of these things—worse than foolish to denounce them as essentially and inherently evil. The pursuit of these higher forms of peace which the world offers is a legitimate pursuit; God does not frown on it, Christ does not forbid it; nay, the progress and welfare of society are seen to be bound up in it. But what God bids us believe is that these pursuits can never satisfy the immortal part of our nature. 'Thou hast made us for thyself,' cried St Augustine in his well-known ejaculation, 'and our hearts cannot know repose until they rest in Thee.'

The Influence of Thought

Phil. iv. 8.—'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'

1. According to the Apostle, and there is no greater authority on the interior life of man, it is what a man thinks about that decides the kind of man he is and will be. As a simple matter of fact, a man soon rises or falls to the level of the things that he thinks about. The thoughts, feelings, interests which he allows to invade and occupy his mind, and to hang about him like an atmosphere, begin to eat into his life, into the very fibre of his moral character. Indeed, we become what we are continually thinking about. So true and inevitable is this that keen eyes can often read the private character of a person from his face. What we continue to think about, that we gradually become, as a dyer's hand is discoloured by the stuff in which he works.

¶ In his remarkable *Meditations*, composed in moments snatched from the arduous labours of the camp, Marcus Aurelius has inscribed this sentence: 'As are thy habitual thoughts, so will be the character of thy mind, for the soul is dyed the colour of its thought.'

¶ A well-known painter once declared that he dared not look upon a bad picture, because for days afterwards it influenced him so tremendously that he could not paint well. And someone has said that men act out dramas in the theatre of the mind which would horrify them if they were transposed to the theatre of conduct. Perhaps a feeling of horror might come to them if they could but realize that they are directly responsible for the things they imagine and that, as a general rule, 'that which is imagined, afterwards becomes.'[1]

2. It is vital that we should have the mastery of our thoughts. And there is no harder task in all the world than that of bringing our thoughts into subjection to our will. It is very difficult to regulate our actions, yet there is a social pressure on our actions. It is supremely difficult to order our speech aright, yet speech is restrained and checked by countless barriers. Every time we act and every time we speak we come into direct contact with society, and prudence and self-love and reputation and business interests admonish us instantly to walk with caution. But thought is free—at least we think it is. It is transacted in a world where none observes it. The law cannot reach us for unclean imaginations. Think how we will of a man he cannot charge us with libel. All the prudential safeguards which God has set on speech, and all the deterrent motives which surround our deeds, are lacking when we enter the silent halls of thought. It is that which makes the management of thought so difficult. It is the secrecy, the absence of

[1] C. F. Walpole, *The Building of Personality*, 72.

restraint, the imagined freedom of the world within. And yet in the whole circle of self-mastery there is nothing more vital than the mastery of thought.

(1) Think, for example, how much of *our common happiness* depends on thought. We begin by imagining it depends on outward things; but we all grow to be wiser by and by. 'There's nothing either good or bad,' says Shakespeare, 'but thinking makes it so.' Now, of course, that is only half a truth. There *are* things that in themselves are for ever good: and there are other things that eternally and everywhere are bad. Never let us be juggled out of these moral certainties. But still there lies a whole world of life and of experience which depends almost entirely upon thought. Our common happiness does not hang on what we view, but on our point of view. There are men who can think themselves any day into a paradise, and others who think themselves into a fever. Have we not known or read of men and women who seemed to have everything this world could give, yet only to look at their faces or their portraits was to read the story of fret and discontent? But St Francis of Assisi, sitting down to dine by the roadside on a few crusts of bread, was so exquisitely and radiantly happy that he could not find words enough for thankfulness. That, then, is an integral part of happiness—the discipline and the government of our thoughts.

¶ Each life memorable for goodness and nobility has for its motive power some noble thought. Here is that cathedral spirit, John Milton. In his loneliness and blindness his mind was his kingdom. He loved to think of things true and pure and of good report. Often at midnight upon the poet's ear there fell the sound of celestial music, which he afterwards transposed into his *Paradise Regained*. Dying, it was given him to say proudly: 'I am not one of those who have disgraced beauty of sentiment by deformity of conduct, nor the maxims of the freeman by the actions of the slave, but by the grace of God I have kept my soul unsullied.' [1]

(2) Again, how much of *our unconscious influence* lies in our thoughts. Not only by what we do and what we say, but by the kind of thoughts we are cherishing in secret, do we impress ourselves upon others, and help or hinder the little world we move in. Maeterlinck, that very suggestive and spiritual writer, puts the matter in his own poetic way. He says, 'Though you assume the face of a saint, a hero, or a martyr, the eye of the passing child will not greet you with the same unapproachable smile, if there lurk within you an evil thought.' There is, of course, exaggeration there. The totality of saintly character is too great to be overborne by the intrusion of one shadow of the devil. But this is certain that, by the thoughts we harbour and let ourselves dwell upon and cherish in the dark, we touch and turn and influence our world when we never dream that we are doing it. There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed—what a depth there is in that one word of Jesus! He is not merely thinking of God's judgment bar to-morrow. He is thinking of the undetected revelation of to-day. Christ recognized that the kind of thing we brood on, the kind of thought we allow ourselves to think, though it never utter itself in actual words, or clothe itself in the flesh and blood of deeds, encompasses and affects the life of others like a poisonous vapour or like a breath of spring. Our secret is not such a secret as we think. Why is it that sometimes we instinctively shrink from people in the very first hour that we meet them? It is because the heart—more powerful than any Röntgen ray—deciphers for itself the secret story: brushes past speech and deed into the hidden place, and apprehends the existence that is there. To think base thoughts is a sin against our neighbour as surely as it is a sin against ourselves.

(3) Then there is the power of thought in *our temptations*. We speak of a sin taking hold suddenly of someone. We have seen a life pursuing a steady and honourable course, and then suddenly going down under some sin. We are shocked and saddened and at a loss, and in our human sympathy we try to explain the evil thing away so as to save the good name of the man. Yet we must face the fact that one can do only what it was in one's heart to do. The truth must be that some thoughts were allowed to hang about the man's mind. They were never summoned peremptorily before the man's own conscience, and rebuked and dismissed. They were permitted. And so

[1] N. D. Hillis, *A Man's Value to Society*, 114.

those thoughts which the man was aware of as injurious and dangerous, but which he did not condemn, began to work within him, dulling his moral sensitiveness and preparing him by a great many private disloyalties to himself to yield to the first sudden occasion to sin. That is the secret history of every sin. As Thomas À Kempis puts it: 'First there cometh to the mind a bare thought of evil, then a strong imagination thereof, afterwards delight and evil motion, then consent.' First, a bare thought—that is the beginning, and it is then that the government of thought means heaven or hell. For if a man has disciplined himself to crush that thought—which may come to the purest and holiest mind—still better, if he has acquired the power to change the current, and to turn his thought instantly into other and nobler channels, temptation is baffled at its very start, and the man stands upon his feet victorious. If we cannot master our besetting thoughts, we shall never master our besetting sins.

¶ There is a striking passage in Mr Vachell's story, *The Waters of Jordan*. In order to win Joy Vennable, Dr Tisdale is tempted to tell a lie, 'And then the innumerable little acts of self-denial and self-sacrifice, the hardships patiently endured, the long hours of tireless ministration to others, *the fine thoughts and aspirations which had nourished his mind*, these, ten thousand strong, rose up and stood by him.'

3. It is not enough to say, 'When I have a desire to yield to any weakness or evil, I resist it and hurry from the place.' So far, that is good. But more is possible. The best way of excluding evil is to attend to what is good. The surest antidote for unhealthy thought is healthy thought. A heart is not safe from evil until it is occupied and possessed by good, by God. We need not be the victims every day and hour of those evil suggestions which are in the very atmosphere of the world. There is a positive step we must take in order to feel safe: we must invite and beseech Jesus Christ to occupy our soul, and thereafter we must do all that is right by Him who orders our life from within.

¶ This principle is somewhat quaintly stated by Brother Juniper, the Franciscan. 'When carnal desires come, I occupy myself with holy meditations and holy desires, and so, when the carnal suggestion knocks at the door of my heart, I say to it, "Begone, for the house is already full, and there is no room for any more guests!"'

The Furnishings of the Heart

Phil. iv. 8.—'Whatsoever things are lovely, . . . think on these things.'

1. In this beautiful verse St Paul tells us how the inner chambers of the Christian heart ought to be furnished. And we must grant that the furnishings are not bare and monotonous, but liberal, graceful, and refined: 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.' And then, as though the Apostle were afraid that the vast enclosure was not wide enough, and that some fair and winsome thing might still be outside its comprehensive pale, he adds still more comprehensive terms, and says, 'If there be any virtue,' whatsoever is morally excellent, 'and if there be any praise,' whatsoever is in any degree commendable, bring within the circle of your contemplation and delight; 'think on these things.' Fasten your eyes upon the lovely, wheresoever it may be found.

These were last words to his fast friends in Philippi, and so have an added appeal. Over and over again the Apostle turns to say farewell, but lingers as he turns, and needs must speak again. We can almost see Epaphroditus cloaked and shod for his journey, waiting with impatience for the roll.

As he penned these words St Paul knew the need of such advice. Rome under Nero was not given to care overmuch either for truth, or reverence, or purity, or righteousness, though we may doubt if the luxury of pagan Rome was much more deadening to the spirit-life than the luxury of our Christian England. He knew well that where there is no noble vision the people perish, and he held up to his Philippian friends a great ideal—the vision of a heart that even in its vacant moments cannot go astray, because it has by habit so filled itself with thoughts of the true, the beautiful, and the good that these at once come back to fill an idle moment with triumphant power and captivating assurance.

He gives them a kind of catalogue of the noblest objects of human thought. He might have given more. He might have given less. His object was not to exhaust, not to analyse, not to set one virtue above another, but to uplift, to animate, to equip for a lofty flight, to indicate the direction as well as the beauty of what he calls in another Epistle, 'the things above.' There is no need to attempt any minute study of the various words chosen by St Paul. Each has a life of its own. Each may be quietly and reverently dissected without losing its life-blood or its life. But sometimes in searching microscopically into parts, we are in danger of losing sight of the beauty of the whole; and it is the beauty of the whole which we should keep in view. The Apostle's words are large and liberal words; let us give them a large and liberal interpretation.

2. Whatsoever in Nature, in art, or in literature is pure and lovely and of good report, think on these things. 'The world is forwarded,' says Matthew Arnold, 'by having its attention directed to the best things.' And no man learns to be a lover of these best things who is not himself ennobled by his love. Consider, for instance, how the instinct of beauty operates for the moral improvement of man. It appeals to his best by providing the only pleasure wholly unselfish. The love of beauty when it is pure is free from the desire of possession. It is fully gratified by observation; a man does not desire to possess a glorious sunset, or a rainbow in the mist of Niagara; he just drinks it in and rejoices. Besides, love and beauty promote fellowship and rebuke isolation. Enjoyment of them is increased by sharing them with others; indeed, some scenes of transcendent beauty are unendurable alone. Again, the appeal of beauty is the antithesis of temptation. Temptation is a momentum applied to us in the direction of evil. Loveliness is a momentum applied to us in the direction of good—it is a 'temptation' to be happy, trustful, brotherly, optimistic.

The thought is capable of almost unlimited application. The appeal to the instinct of beauty as an aid to devotion in the public worship of the church is an instinctive act of homage. When the Christ drove worldliness from the Temple, He spoke no word of rebuke of its beauty and ritual. Again, the Divine instinct of beauty is a constant protest against the antagonism some would establish between the spiritual and the secular; to draw such lines is to shut God out of some department of the life of the humanity which is His body. The indwelling Logos, or Word, of the Father ought to be supreme over the whole range of what is called the secular life—Literature, Art, Science, Politics, Education, Trade. Art certainly ministers powerfully to moral elevation. A life shut out from all beauty and recreation is distinctly a lower and not a higher life. Once acknowledge God in all things, and Art will minister to the highest. Nothing morally ugly can be truly artistically beautiful; a human voice, singing unworthy words, is blasphemous discord to the real believer. A statue or a painting, executed by a Phidias, would be only hideous to a God-taught eye if it suggested evil. The moral sense will guide, in God's children, the appetite for the beautiful; false standards of beauty only arise where mind, and not spiritual intuition, is the centre of thought.

¶ Professor Gilbert Murray writes of the Greeks that 'the idea of service to the community was more deeply rooted in them than in us, and that they asked of their poets first of all this question: "Does he help to make men better? Does he make life a better thing?"' These were the questions that Signor (Mr Watts) asked himself daily and hourly. I remember how pleased he was when Verestchagin agreed heartily with his aphorism, 'Art should be used to make men better.'[1]

3. To rise to a higher plane. It is hardly necessary to point out that the Apostle's injunction to think on 'whatsoever things are lovely,' while it includes all we have said, also far transcends it. The correct classical meaning of the Greek word *prosphiles*, translated 'lovely,' reaches to that which is more enduring than art, music, or natural beauty; it means the morally beautiful, that which is essentially lovable in character. Natural beauties will pass away, soul-stirring harmonies will 'tremble away into silence,' personal loveliness will fade, beauty of character endures and increases. There is no loveliness so beautiful and so lasting as the beauty of holiness. Do we believe that goodness is the greatest—the most beautiful—thing in the world, that, however richly dowered

[1] Mrs Watts in *George Frederick Watts*, ii. 279.

life may be, better not be at all than not be good?

¶ What she saw in that strange new clearness, that merciless, yet somehow curiously comforting, clearness, was that love has to learn to let go, that love if it is real always does let go, makes no claims, sets free, is content to love without being loved—and that nothing was worth while, nothing at all in the tiny moment called life except being good. Simply being good. And though people might argue as to what precisely being good meant, they knew in their hearts just as she knew in her heart.[1]

And there is One, who is called 'the Altogether Lovely,' who is never so far off from any one of us as even to be near, who, though truly the embodiment of the God who made us, is as truly a man as we are. 'Whatsoever things are lovely' are all found in utmost perfection in Him; to be like Him is the object of our lives. Every crowning grace in His character is now in us in possibility, and is one day to be realized in us. 'Thinking on these things'—in other words, concentrating mental activity, earnest prayer, confident assurance, genuine effort upon Jesus the Supreme Revelation of the Father's heart—we shall become like our thought and be transformed into His image.

And let us remember that if, in dealing with unlovely characters, we will be mentally blind to their apparent faults, mentally deny their cantankerous attitudes, mentally affirm the Christ nature, some character of loveliness in them, say to ourselves 'whatsoever things are lovely' must be in these unlovable persons, inasmuch as they too came forth from God, we shall not only educate ourselves, but we shall also lift them unconsciously.

¶ Elizabeth Bennet, in *Pride and Prejudice*, says to her sister Jane: 'With *your* good sense to be so honestly blind to the follies and nonsense of others! Affectation of candour is common enough—one meets with it everywhere. But to be candid without ostentation or design—to take the good of everybody's character and make it still better, and say nothing of the bad—belongs to you alone.'

Outside a garden-fence I saw a child
  Pluck one red rose that strayed beyond the bars:
And no one could forget the way he smiled—
  As if he heard the music of the stars!
To that poor little waif it meant escape
  From utter loneliness, to hold a flower,
And Beauty in its most appealing shape
  Made earth to him like heaven for an hour.

Ah, if we, too, would only fill the mind
  With things of truth and loveliness like those
Enjoined on the Philippians by St Paul,
  We would know Beauty of another kind—
Of Faith and Hope that will outlive the rose,
  And Charity more beautiful than all.[1]

[1] *Elizabeth and Her German Garden.*

The Transforming Secret

Phil. iv. 11.—'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'

Looked at from any point of view the life and character of the Apostle Paul are a sheer amazement to us. For, quite apart from the obvious rich gifts of personality which he brought into the service of Christ, there are manifested a steadiness of growth and aim, a persistence of purpose—despite the most forbidding and fearsome difficulties—an acquired ability on his part to rise above any given circumstances of opposition and unfriendliness, which make us welcome any proffered explanation. And especially if it is a really workable suggestion for our own lives. It has been said, and truly, that every Christian life is a parable for the education of others.

1. What is there about St Paul that makes the thing which is hard to us appear so easy and natural to him? Here is his explanation: 'I have been initiated into the secret for all sorts and conditions of life'—for prosperity and privation alike. It has to be borne in mind that he had had by no means an easy time since the joy and glory of his first vision of Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. He had been humiliated by having his very commission to preach called into question. He had been derided by those whom he sought to enlighten. He knew what it was to suffer the shame of rejection. He had known the joy and appreciation of love, but he knew also its underside of suffering and pain. In his own words, he had abounded and he had been

[1] Lady Ashmore, *Songs of the Camerons and Other Poems.*

abased. But he had never lost his inner serenity. All the inward irritations which perplexed and assailed him had not given him a distorted view of life, or obscured in any degree his vision of his Lord. He had learned the secret which transforms everything.

What is this secret which makes a man content when everything goes contrary to expectation—content to go on, satisfied that he is in the line of God's will and hence of his own highest good, with no desire to go back or to take up an easier way of life? What is it that gives such a reliable quality of soul, which is itself both in abasement and abundance? For abasement, whatever it consisted of, obviously could not reach the hidden man of the heart. It could not make him hard, or envious, or cynical about others. Note that Paul does not say foolish things about poverty being the best thing for men. But he does say, 'I have learned the secret which helps me to live as a poor man to the glory of God. I have learnt that a poor man need not lack anything that is really essential.' Moreover, he says he has abounded; and abundance has no danger for a man who knows this secret. There is perhaps nothing harder in life than to live affluently, to manage wealth—of possession, ability, health, friendship, opportunity—without mismanaging oneself. But Paul is no ascetic. He does not say that the only thing to do with wealth is to give it away. That might be a sheer evasion of personal responsibility. What he does say is, 'I have learned the secret that enables me to keep my head and my feet when the hard conditions of life relax, and the hot sun of prosperity shines. I have learned how to be abased and how to abound.'

Of course, this does not mean that Paul had become merely passive, a fatalist with a theory of God and the universe in which there is no place for individuality. For there are times and emergencies when contentment is not only not a virtue but is a positive and actual vice. There are conditions of life in which, if ever a man is content, he is living in open violation of the spirit of Jesus Christ. There is a Divine discontent which in certain circumstances must move enlightened men to stern decision and to strenuous action. For instance, when God's law is flouted in public life; when, instead of a spirit of brotherhood, competitive selfishness reigns; when strength exploits weakness, and wealth exploits labour; when profitable evil maintains itself in power by encouraging the weakest and most pathetic passions of men and women; when wide-open doors challenge the faith of those who profess belief in God to pierce the gloom of heathenism with the light of life—then a man who has the spirit of Christ will not be contented with anything less than the strenuous consecration of his life's entire capacity to the service of the Lord. Whatever Paul's secret is, it does not make him a fanatic, a one-sided man. It makes an all-round man of him, keen and competent for the service, the conflict, the duty of the Kingdom of God.

2. Is that secret discoverable, and is it within our reach? It is just this: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' In other letters of his, Paul has proclaimed Christ's life given for men in a redemptive sacrifice. But that is not his entire gospel. That is not the secret to which he refers here. Paul begins his testimony where the Gospels leave off. The Gospels leave off with the story of the Resurrection. Paul then takes the story up and says, 'Christ is our life.' This is the secret—that He gives His life to redeemed men in a recreative impartation, that He actually lives in His people. Christian life, in Paul's conception, is not mental satisfaction with the doctrine of Christ crucified. It is moral submission to His living authority. It is not merely a life of faith in Christ crucified. It is a life of obedience to Christ enthroned within the heart and life. And this is the record of his initiation: 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' He is under the control of his Lord, who has come to the throne of his heart and will.

¶ There is an impressive illustration of this given by Lord Tennyson in his description of King Arthur's subjection of the soil of our island to his rule and power:

And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
. . . . . .
Then he drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast, and fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight
And so return'd.

Though Paul is fully aware of the energies of Christ within him, he is never slack in regard to self-scrutiny and discipline. He never misconceives the grace of the indwelling Saviour as a justification of moral lethargy. He knows full well, as every wise man knows, that to let things slide is not the way of holiness. For when things begin to slide it is always in one direction—always downward. He takes no liberties with himself, or with the grace of God. He says, 'This one thing I do, because this one thing I am—a man in whom Jesus Christ has come to dwell.' So he brings the Christ-mind to bear on all the experiences of life. Outward things do not lose their reality to him, but they entirely lose their supremacy. Feelings cease to be a governing consideration; indeed they cease to be a consideration at all to him! And a new standard of reckoning is installed, which rules out jealousies, envies, competitive ambitions as being meaningless and futile emotions.

3. Paul has learned the secret of constancy in thus learning Christ. Thus it is that a characteristic word of his is 'always.' He says, 'I am always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that his life may be manifest also in my mortal flesh.' 'Always abounding in the work of the Lord.' 'Always rejoicing.' 'Always praying.' 'Giving thanks unto God always for all things.' That is the effect of this secret on his life. He becomes competent to act upon the views and standards which carry their own authority to his conscience. He may be conscious of unworthiness and weakness; but the same indwelling presence of his Lord, that brings enlightenment and moral judgment to his mind, brings also the power to step out and prove God. So his enlightenment and his obedience are always keeping pace. He never becomes a mere theological expert. He is always the pilgrim. In face of unspeakable opposition and almost unimaginable difficulty, he says, 'I can do all things!'—that is, 'all things that fall within the will of God for my life.' And so this transforming secret will work out in the individual life of each of us. It will make us reliable in any branch of His work to which He appoints us. Paul was traveller, teacher, artisan, pioneer, pastor, and Christian apologist; and from the records it is quite clear that he was as zealous, keen and purposeful at the end of his life as at the beginning. He stood perfect and complete in all the will of God. And so, too, may we.

We cannot read Paul's letters without being conscious that there is vibrant in them all the belief that his Lord is coming again. And that hope inspires and impels him to serve. He can do all things except be lethargic when a church shows, by its condition, that it denies its Divine origin and its Divine Lord. Because he believes that Christ is coming again he labours untiringly that those churches in whose beginnings he had a share may walk worthy of the Lord. And if the great hope that we shall see our Lord face to face is as real to us as it was to the Apostle, we shall express it by doing with all our powers what has been given us to do.

¶ Some time ago, when in America, says Mr Stuart Holden, I heard some lines which were written as the result of a visit paid by Mr Shadwell, one of America's poets, to a camp meeting amongst the negro cotton workers in the Bahamas. He heard some of those black-skinned, white-souled believers singing about the coming of the Lord. And he put into a more literary form the burden of their song. It was this:

There's a King and Captain high,
Who is coming by-and-by,
And He'll find me hoeing cotton when He comes!
You can hear His legions charging,
In the regions of the sky,
And He'll find me hoeing cotton when He comes!
When He comes! when He comes!
All the dead shall rise in answer to His drums;
And the fires of His encampment star the firmament on high.
And the heavens shall roll asunder when He comes!

There's a Man they thrust aside,
Who was tortured till He died,
And He'll find me hoeing cotton when He comes!
He was hated and rejected,
He was scorned and crucified,
And He'll find me hoeing cotton when He comes!
When He comes! when He comes!
He'll be crowned by saints and angels when He comes;
They'll be shouting out 'Hosannah!' to the Man that men denied,
And I'll kneel among my cotton when He comes!

Power

Phil. iv. 13.—'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

'I LINK my earthly feebleness to Thine almighty power'—that is the definition of Christianity. Its claim is to put men in touch with unlimited power. The claim is made on the authority of our Lord's parting promise—'Ye shall receive power'—and it is substantiated by the word of the long line of witnesses in every age who 'out of weakness have been made strong.' And, somehow, these people have always accounted for the change in the words of one who illustrated it so startlingly in the first century. 'I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me,' or rather, 'I have strength for all things in Him who giveth me power!' There is no word 'do' in the Greek.

Such witnesses there are still, but apparently not enough of them to convince the modern world that the claim still holds good. Such lives have always provided the most compelling form of 'Christian evidence.' Is it perhaps the deficiency of such evidence that is responsible for the prevailing attitude of 'modern thought'? What percentage of modern Christians possess such evidential value? If there is anything in this suggestion, the first duty of Christians is obvious. We have to ask ourselves whether *we* still believe that original promise of 'power'; whether *our* lives show that it still holds good; and, if we cannot honestly say so—'if I can do all things in Him who giveth me power' is a phrase that would be unreal on our lips—whether we really understand what the promise means, and what are the conditions for its fulfilment.

1. What do we mean by Christian power? This means, first, looking at ourselves 'as we are,' as human nature 'finds itself,' quite apart from religion and the religious view of it. What is it to be just 'human,' to be 'a man'? It means, briefly, to be a curious self-contradiction; to be, apparently, the highest order of being in the universe, and yet the one which, left to itself, is least likely to reach its full natural perfection, satisfying its instincts, being perfect of its kind. An animal on one of the lower rungs of the scale of creation, if left to itself and its environment, will normally be perfect of its kind and content with its existence. Man, standing at the top of the scale, is never comfortable there; he is torn between the instinct to rise yet higher, and the rival instinct to throw himself down. Two kingdoms claim him, and to find himself in the one involves in the same degree losing himself in the other. It is not as a theologian, but as an ordinary human creature, that St Paul can say, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh . . . so that ye may not do the things that ye would.'

I like, dislike; lament for what I could not;
I do, undo; yet still do what I should not,
And, at the self-same instant, will the thing I would not.[1]

Thus man, alone of the creatures, presents the spectacle of a house divided against itself—the proverbial symbol of weakness. And his weakness is actually due to his high place in the scale. It is his very *powers*—the number and complexity of them—that leave him distracted and weak. It is his right to choose between rival claims that makes him need the power to choose aright.

And so God comes in as the natural complement of human life—an essential element in human self-realization. It is not theology, but human experience, that tells us so, that forces us into our conception of God. Theology only claims to tell us more about the God in whom our own natures bid us believe. And that which God contributes towards completing, satisfying, restoring the balance of human life is what theology sums up as 'the grace of God.' 'Grace' is simply a convenient term for 'all the ways in which God comes in to the help of our lives.' And over against it stands 'Faith,' which similarly covers 'all the ways in which we appropriate the help of God.' The terms are correlatives; neither, strictly, can be conceived of without the other.

2. What, then, are the chief ways in which God becomes the complement of human lives? What are the needs that He comes in to meet? As we have seen, the need to be met may be summed up as 'weakness,' and so the supply may be summed up as 'power.' But this power, of course, takes various forms. For

[1] Quarles.

instance, the very central element in our 'weakness' is the strange fact we call sin. There is no more serious handicap to a man than a guilty conscience, and even those who do not themselves feel the burden of their past, yet know its weakening effects. To have chosen wrongly many times is almost tantamount to selling your free-will, and compelling yourself to choose the same way again. Thus, the grace of God appears, first and foremost, as *forgiveness*—that is the first way a man needs God's help in his life. He requires to be 'justified by faith' in order that he may 'have peace towards God.' But when that is provided, and the handicap removed, there is still need of help for the course before him, and that need may be summed up as the need of *power*, the thing which we find we have not in ourselves.

¶ Dr E. Stanley Jones tells of an Indian student who wrote to him as follows: 'I have deep faith in my own religion. I believe it to be entirely true, but I need not be ashamed to tell that it exacts unflinching duty and knows no grace. Philosophically it is all right. You may believe, according to it, that the Power behind things is supremely just and indifferent, but we err we know not why, we are led on as it were on the waves of sin and mistakes. There are powers too great for our frail being, and I wish then that there were a God who would be kind to me, who would feel my weaknesses and who would extricate me from the meshes of sin and temptation.'

Powers, of course, we have. But not only are they the prime cause of our weakness, but often the more a man has the worse off in this matter he is. How often has a man been prevented from finding and living by the power of God through possessing such 'riches' and 'powers' of his own as, say, social position, or personal charm, or artistic temperament, or quickness of brain, or distinction in games? The greater our 'powers,' the greater our need of 'power,' if only because we are the more likely to be blind to our own weakness. Here Christianity stands apart from all other philosophies and religions, in that it not only recognizes the need, and the fact that the supply is in God—that, after all, any 'religion' takes for granted—but tells man how God gives this supply, and how anyone can get it. And this it does in the twin doctrines of the Holy Spirit and of the believer's union with Christ. 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' 'I can do all things in Christ.'

3. Though we cannot explain to ourselves how the power comes out from God, we can find helpful analogies to suggest how it works in us. Have we ever been struck with the fact that, in the material universe, 'power' is never originated by man, but always given to him? Man has to find the power and to apply it, but it is *there* quite apart from him. An electrical 'power-station' is not a place where power is created, but a place where power, already found in one form, is converted into another and applied to certain uses afterwards. And then look at the machinery to which it is applied. It has 'powers'—it is designed to do certain things, and can do them. But when? Only while it uses, or rather is used by, the power laid on. Then you get your light, or motion, or heat. Your machine has 'received power,' and 'in' that power it can 'do all things' which it was made to do. But if the power be cut off, the engine stops, and the light goes out; in spite of its 'powers' the machine stands 'powerless.'

Then, again, take another illustration. A small boat is on the bay and wants to cross to the other side. The power which is to help it across is all there in the wind; but when is that power effectual? Only when those on board give it the means of communicating itself to the boat by hoisting a sail. True, the sails are powerless without the wind, but so is the wind useless till a sail is held up for it to fill and drive.

The spiritual parallel needs no working out. Spiritual power is not generated within a man, but 'given' to him. But it only can be given in so far as he himself provides it with means of self-communication—in so far as he puts and keeps himself 'in touch.'

The machinery we are speaking of in one sense 'possesses the power'; in another sense, and more truly, it is 'possessed by it.' The power is greater than the machine it controls, and a higher thing in the scale of Nature. What then must be the nature of the Power which is to possess and control and utilize a person? Surely, it must be not only a Person, *but something more as well*—a Being still higher in the scale than man himself. In other words, God.

So the 'power,' which we have seen to be the crucial need of personal beings, must come to us in the form of a Personal Being, who, at the same time, is more than personal, and is therefore able not only to help, as human persons may, but to possess us. And the only possible attitude for us is that of the sail to the wind, the machine to the electric current, the attitude of faith, dependence, surrender.

The power is there, centred in and emanating from an Infinite Personality, who is more than able to direct, control, and utilize all the human hearts and wills in His universe, even as the wind is more than able to fill all the sails that can possibly be hoisted to it over the whole area of the 'multitudinous seas.' But this power can only communicate itself when we supply the means, when we, as it were, hoist the sail; when we stretch out the hand of faith. Because God *is there* faith succeeds; and, succeeding, confirms itself. The experiment passes into an experience.

4. In touch with this Divine power we have confidence in attempting even the most difficult things that Christ calls upon us to do. We may be content to know that He makes no mistake in His calls. He calls us to do a thing which seems beyond us; or a thing which is directly contrary to our bent and to our particular capacity, and yet he makes us see that in Him we shall do it, or rather He will do it in us. If a call comes to us and we are tempted to decline it on account of our unfitness let us not put it aside too rapidly. It may be this call that is to be the occasion of our getting into the secret of God's power. If we are sure that He calls us we shall find that, powerless as we are in ourselves, we have discovered exactly this point that the Apostle dwells on; 'all strength is mine, I am empowered.'

¶ When Westcott was quite an elderly man of sixty-four, when he had spent all his life in the study and the professorial chair of Cambridge, he was suddenly called by Lord Salisbury to take the heavy charge of the bishopric of Durham. His interests had never been in parochial or diocesan work, he had no practical knowledge of it, but when that call came to the quiet student at Cambridge at the age of sixty-four, he laid aside all his personal preferences, and wrote to his son, 'In the prospect of such a charge every thought of fitness vanishes; there can be no fitness or unfitness, but simply absolute surrender. I think I can offer all, and God will use the offering.'

The Fellowship of Giving and Receiving

Phil. iv. 15.—'And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only' (R.V.).

Paul's friends at Philippi, thinking of the many hardships he would have to suffer in person, had sent him tokens of their love and gratitude—money and gifts. This thoughtfulness affected him very much, and to that we owe this letter. And yet he found it hard to acknowledge it suitably. He does not want to speak of it, and indeed was finishing the letter without referring to it, except in so far as the general tenderness expressed gratitude. But after he has twice said 'finally,' he plunges into the matter. Paul was proud in such things. He who gave everything, his whole life for others, would take nothing.

Perhaps this was not pride so much as policy. He would suffer anything rather than give even the excuse for a sneer at his motives. More than once he asserted his right to be supported by the Church, but gave up his right lest he might damage his work. This was in the early days when he had to break up the fallow ground. Later on he probably relaxed his rule somewhat, when there was not so much need of it; for here he says that had been his rule 'in the beginning of the gospel when I departed from Macedonia.' Even then there had been one exception—the Philippians themselves. Their offer in those early days was probably as spontaneous and hearty, as much the fruit of love and gratitude as now. It would have been impossible to refuse their gifts without hurting their feelings. Paul accepted them as he accepted their presents in prison, because he felt it would have been churlish to refuse, and because after all he had real need, and most of all because his children at Philippi loved him and he loved them. He accepted in the spirit in which it was offered.

1. It is the fashion among moralists, especially satirists of morals, to declare that to do a

man a benefit is to make an enemy of him. One could pick out half a dozen passages from Thackeray, for example, expressing this sentiment. 'What more can one say of the Christian charity of a man, than that he is actually ready to forgive those who have done him every kindness, and with whom he is wrong in a dispute?' he says in *Pendennis*. Or this sentence from *Philip*, 'Kindness is very indigestible.' He wonders whether the traveller who fell among thieves was grateful afterward to the good Samaritan. 'The hand that feeds us,' says Emerson, 'is in danger of being bitten.' All the poets from Shakespeare downwards have something to say of man's ingratitude. We have accepted this idea into our thought and speech. The quickest way to lose a friend is to lend him money.

Now, all this is not mere cheap cynicism, though some of it may be. Shakespeare and Emerson and Thackeray do not agree upon a fact of human nature without very good grounds. The fact is as they state it, but the significance of the fact may not be so disgraceful to human nature as it appears. The truth of the fact is that it is hard to receive gracefully, and equally hard to give graciously. It is hard to receive gracefully. To accept help seems like taking away our rights as men. It is like an invasion of our kingdom and the loss of our independence. It is that which makes it hard to receive, and it is the twist in the independence which gives truth to the satirists' remark about gratitude. Men feel they are being wronged in being helped; or rather the sense of humiliation makes them revenge themselves on the man who, by his help, humiliates them to themselves.

Indeed the chief fault is often on the side of the man who gives. By the manner of his giving he sometimes makes it a humiliation. This fellowship of giving and receiving is a very delicate one. A grudging spirit, or a pompous condescension, or a huckster's manner in giving takes away all the bloom from the act. 'Let him that giveth,' said Paul to the Romans, 'give with simplicity, and him that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness.' The fact that men expect gratitude and seek to exact it is a proof that the manner of their giving is wrong. You cannot buy love with gifts. You cannot barter alms for spiritual returns. You cannot enter the fellowship of giving and receiving except through sympathy. Loveless charity is an offence. But with love all such difficulties vanish. It is no humiliation to receive from the hand you love.

> Gifts of one who loved me
> 'Twas high time they came;
> When he ceased to love me
> Time they stopped for shame.[1]

2. The Christian doctrine of wealth is the only solution of our social disorder and inequalities. We are only stewards of what we have. We can be faithful or unjust stewards, but it is not our own. We think this applies only to the very wealthy! Not at all. It is the Christian doctrine of all possessions. Whether we will or no we are all living in a fellowship of giving and receiving. If labour is useless without capital, capital can do nothing without labour—not even get food to eat. All that we have is got through our fellow-men; and all that we have is got from God. Nothing that we have is our own, strictly speaking, except the way in which we have it. Nothing that we have is ours, except the manner in which we receive and the spirit in which we keep. The soul is the man. All transactions of giving and receiving are nothing in themselves, except as they reflect the motives and true life of men.

¶ Fritz Kreisler, the world famous violinist, writes: 'I was born with music in my system. I knew musical scores instinctively before I knew my A B C. It was a gift of Providence. I did not acquire it. So I do not even deserve thanks for the music.

'I never look upon the money I earn as my own. It is public money. It is only a fund intrusted to my care for proper disbursement. I am constantly endeavouring to reduce my needs to the minimum. I feel morally guilty in ordering a costly meal, for it deprives someone else of a slice of bread—some child, perhaps, of a bottle of milk. My beloved wife feels exactly the same way about these things as I do. You know what I eat; you know what I wear. In all these years of my so-called success in music we have not built a home for ourselves. Between it and us stand all the homeless in the world!'

If men lived in such a fellowship, all our troubles would vanish. It may be a counsel

[1] Emerson.

of perfection, but we dare not turn our back upon it in face of Christ's command to seek it. If we are in fellowship with Christ we will be in that fellowship. If we accept Him at all as our Master, if we see even partially with His eyes and seek, however imperfectly, the things He sought, we will put a truer value on the rival plans of life. Paul could accept this gift because he saw something grander in it than itself. He saw sacrifice and love in it. He valued the gift for the sake of the givers. 'Not that I desire the gift, but that I desire the fruit that may abound to your account from giving it.'

3. It is a tragic thing when men get to love things, to desire gifts, money, materials for their own sake. Yet what a common disease it is—the love of things! How easily we all slip into the idea that happiness consists in acquisition! The Rich Fool of Christ's parable was a fool, not because he was rich, but because he thought that the life of man consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. What poor fools and rich fools there are still, if that is the definition of folly! The reason why we cannot belong, like Paul, to the true fellowship of giving and receiving is because, unlike him, we 'desire the gift.' We think that if we only had what we desire, we would at last be happy. It cannot be done. The heart of man is insatiable; it cries ever, Give, give! We cannot be satisfied thus, because we were not made to lose our hearts to things. We lumber our houses with gifts and possessions. We lumber our hearts with them. We want to belong to the fellowship of receiving, and have little or nothing to do with the fellowship of giving. Many a human soul is buried in the wealth it possesses, or covets.

¶ There is a terrible incident in one of Frank Norris' novels in which Behrman, the successful financial operator, at the height of his power, master of great enterprises which he has come to control, goes on board one of the grain-ships he owns, as she is loading with the cargo which is to demonstrate his power in the world's market. As he watches the golden stream of the grain pouring into her hold, the equivalent of enormous riches, the symbol of his power and its source, he stumbles and falls into the open hatchway and finds himself struggling for his life with the flood that is pouring from the elevator into the ship. He is mad with fear and the hunger for his life, and fights frantically against the horrible death which impends. But the dust suffocates him, the resistless torrent covers him, his feet get no hold, his cries are not heard, his hands can clutch no firm support, and he is buried alive in his own wealth, smothered in his own plenty.[1]

This does not mean that we should neglect business or the material side of life generally. It does not mean the attempt to resurrect any form of stupid asceticism, which pretends to despise the body and the world. The world is full of the gifts of God to be used. It only means that we should covet the best gifts, and not let our higher instincts be killed by the lower. Life is something more than even the abundance of the things we possess. It is better to become than to receive, better to give than to get. The way to be in the blessed fellowship of receiving is to join the goodly fellowship of giving. 'Follow after love.'

Saints in Caesar's Household

Phil. iv. 22.—'All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household' (R.V.).

Bishop Lightfoot has an illuminating note on the *Domus Augusta*—the household of Cæsar. It was a vast household, not composed of members of the Imperial family, princes and princesses, courtiers and nobles, but filled with thousands of subordinates, who served in one capacity or in another the ruler of the world—slaves, or freedmen, or soldiers. They constituted a great part of the population, not only in Rome itself but throughout Italy and the Provinces. They fulfilled every sort of duty, more or less domestic: duties menial, duties of the poor and down-trodden drudge, duties replete with attraction and interest. But not one of them was his own master or mistress; each was at the Emperor's beck and call, each must hurry on his errands, and humour his caprices, and lose his own individuality in his lord's. On the tombs which have been unearthed in or near the famous city on the Tiber one may read who these men and women were and what they did. Then Bishop Lightfoot turns to the closing chapter of the Epistle to the Romans,

[1] *The Octopus*, ch. ix.

with its greetings to this Christian and that other resident in the capital of the Empire, and shows that numbers of the names recorded there are identical with those in the sepulchral inscriptions—Amplias, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Tryphæna and Tryphosa, Rufus, Hermes, Philologus and Julia. Working under Cæsar's orders and about his court, in the middle of the first century, were freedmen and slaves bearing these very designations. Probably they were the believers whom the Apostle remembered in so kindly a fashion. Probably, too, they were the saints who wished him to convey their salutations to their brethren in distant Philippi.

1. How shall we define the saint? He is one who, in his deepest being, is separated to God and in covenant with Him. The sun in his sky is God, Father and Saviour and Spirit. From secret springs far beneath the surface the streams issue which make his whole life fertile. But how, again, shall we define the saint? He is one whose godliness is illustrated in daily speech and action. His aspirations and purities and blessednesses are not lost when he leaves his seclusion and retirement; the opposite is the case; they are ripened by the discipline and the challenge of the crowd. If his heart points constantly to its Pole, his character is disclosed in the throng and rush of Cæsar's household. There was no cloistral seclusion for the Emperor's slaves. There was no hermitage of retirement for the legionaries of the Prætorian Guard. Yet Paul, who understood what he talked about, calls them saints in deed and in truth.

Let us hold fast the remembrance of both sides. We are not saints unless our hidden souls are God's. Any mere assumption of the Christian name must soon have been withered and killed in the fierce light that beat on the *Domus Augusta*; and, if God is not our personal and chiefest joy, our religion will by and by ring hollow among our fellow-men, as it will always be abhorrent to Him whose first demand is reality. But, as certainly, our saintliness must be exercised and educated in the routine and rush of the customary task. If we cannot be holy in our families and at our business, the surroundings where we spend five-sixths of our time, of what use is it being holy in such hours and places as are left?

¶ One recalls Lowell's portrait of Abraham Lincoln, 'no lonely mountain-peak of mind, thrusting to thin air,' but

> Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
> Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,
> Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.

2. Cæsar's household was a strange and unfavourable field for the cultivation of the Christlike life. Think of its employments. The Emperor had servants to watch over his wardrobe, and others in charge of his plate-chest, and others who tasted his food and drink before he partook of them himself. There was not much to refine the soul in such occupations. Or think of the companions the Christians had. They were heathen, steeped in superstition, and foul with sin. And think of the monster whom they served, when the Epistle to the Philippians was being dictated in Paul's hired room. Nero's name is a synonym for a hundred abominable wickednesses. Yet here it was that the Apostle's friends kept their loyalty, their love, and their zeal.

¶ I once saw, at a friend's house, a collection of flowers which had been pressed and were preserved between the leaves of a book. They were so uncommon in their beauty and variety that I asked what they were and where they had grown. 'We found them years ago,' was the answer, 'in the most unlikely place in which you would suppose flowers of any sort could grow. It was a rocky promontory on a lonely part of the coast of New Zealand. We had gone there on some expedition and were greatly surprised to find these flowers growing in profusion among the rocks. We gathered some and have preserved them as specimens of a natural curiosity. They probably came there, originally, from seeds, blown off some passing ship, which found a congenial soil among the rocks, where they grew and flourished.'[1]

'Saints in Cæsar's household.' That is the one complete answer to all the misuse of the doctrine of environment. There are no conditions of life in which a man cannot with some pledge of success fulfil his moral obligations. Cæsar's household is our stock excuse for all that is unhallowed and unchristian in our lives. 'It is no good trying, it is no good hoping to

[1] J. W. W. Moeran.

get the best of Rome at all points.' When we say that, we do injustice to the Divinity of our religion, misinterpret the laws that govern the life of our spirit, and hold with feeble grasp the thing that makes us men—the freedom of our will. The history of Christianity from the beginning has been one continuous conquest over environment. Christ in a man's heart is stronger than the devil in a man's pathway; and conversely the devil in a man's heart is stronger than Christ in a man's pathway. The victory always goes to the power that has captured the inner life—the imagination and affection and will. For saint or for sinner the final determining force of life acts from within. Having realized that, we are free to confess that the conditions of our lives do much to determine the ease or the difficulty of every course of action. And, as things are, every man who saves his soul saves it in spite of the world. Subtle pleas of convention, harsh imperatives of necessity, the assumed authority and the attempted coercions of circumstance—these are the things that all who would be holy have had to face and to fight. And sainthood has always fought a victorious fight against these things. There is no heroism in the world like the heroism of the pure heart.

When we are told that we cannot break with social usages, cannot despise unworthy traditions, cannot deviate from unsound business customs—when, in a word, the existence of the thing that ought not to be is made to prove the impracticability of the thing that ought to be—let us remember the greeting that came to the Christians of Philippi from the saints in Cæsar's household. Every man can do what he knows he ought to do, if he is willing to pay the price of his obedience. Sanctity of life has always been possible; it has never been easy. Sainthood in Cæsar's household cost some of these people their lives. They were made living torches to illuminate Nero's gardens, or sport for the crowd and food for the lions when Rome had a gala-day. And however civilization may have humanized and alleviated the conditions of our Godward efforts, there is still in every battle for the right a tragic note. Still there is a death it is life to die.

'Tis as hard at duty's call
To lay one's life down day by day
As to lay it down once for all.

3. The saint in Cæsar's household is the truest triumph and vindication of the religion of Jesus Christ. In the sympathetic fellowship of the Church sanctity may find inspiration; but it is amid the oppositions of the world that it finds its effective ministry. The world at its worst needs the Church at its best. The great need of the world has ever been the godly life in the ungodly home, flawless honesty amid the shady practices of business, crystal purity of thought and passion amid sensual and unclean things in social life.

Let us have done with the religion of which men are half ashamed, of which they ought to be quite ashamed, for it is but a parody of Christianity. Let us be assured that if our religion requires to be apologized for we had better get rid of it altogether. The Christian was never meant to go through the world with a 'hope I don't intrude' look on his face. We ought to intrude. We are bound to intrude. Jesus was an intruder. Christianity is just a powerful, splendid, infinitely justifiable intrusion. Let us not think to wear the pearl of great price beneath a veil of fine-spun compromise. That is the way to lose it. And let us know this, that if any man would serve Christ, the need for that service and the sphere of it are close to him. To keep a pure heart amid a stained world, to live a straight, unselfish life, to love the unlovely, to serve the needy and to fear nothing but sin—this is to serve God and preach the gospel of His grace, and finally to sanctify Cæsar's household.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION

I

The Place and the People

Colossæ was a small town on the main trade route from the East to Ephesus. It was about six miles from Laodicea and about twenty from Apamea. Its position and physical features are fully described by Professor W. M. Ramsay (*Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*). Very little seems to be known about the constituent elements in its population. What is of importance to the understanding of the letter that St Paul addressed to them is, that while the population was, no doubt, in the main Phrygian, the Christian community was clearly subject to very strong Jewish influence. Jews were, as we know, to be found in very considerable force both in Laodicea and Apamea. We may, I think, take it for granted that most, if not all, of the early converts in Colossæ had been adherents of a synagogue or of a Jewish prayer-meeting before they became Christian.

II

The Colossian Heresy

Its Origin.—Apart from the evidence of this letter we have scant means of judging how the Jews reacted to the Phrygian temperament in seeking to make proselytes. There must have been a strong vein of primitive animism among them, which would render their converts receptive of the views relating to the world of spirits which were current in Jewish thought during the first century. The remarkable episode described in Acts xix. 13-17, is significant in this connection; and the books burnt by the practisers of curious arts at Ephesus must have consisted chiefly of charms and magic formulæ containing the names of the Angels to be invoked in particular cases.

The fundamental fact would seem to be that, according to the Jews, all things in the physical world—fire, wind, water, stars, etc.—had their appropriate Angels or spirits. The fact that the physical things do affect us was sufficient evidence that there must be a spiritual force behind them, because it is difficult to believe that anything that is not itself spiritual can affect our spirits. It becomes therefore at times difficult, if not impossible, to decide whether the 'elements of the world' are regarded as strictly material, or whether we are to pierce in thought to the 'elemental deities,' to use Deissmann's phrase, behind them. Life from this point of view was a very risky affair, though the Jew believed that by strict observance of the Law and the Precepts he might escape the evil powers to which (or to whom) the whole Gentile world was subjected. A study of the Rabbinic regulations to ensure a devout Jew against contamination by Gentile idolatry, as laid down for instance in the *Aboda Zara*, is a startling revelation of the fetters which this fear imposed. At first Jehovah was regarded as taking Israel under His own special protection, but in time a view was developed according to which the Law was regarded as not only given in the first instance through Angels, but also as constantly administered by them. Under these circumstances the simplest view of the Colossian heresy would be to suppose that a devout Jew who had been converted to Christianity, not only continued to rule his own life by these regulations, but also tried to get all the members of the Church in Colossæ, both Jew and Gentile, to follow his example.

Its Content.—There is no trace of any revolt against St Paul's authority, or any undercurrent of criticism of his neglect of the outlying parts of his diocese. Zahn sees signs of this criticism in the stress that St Paul lays on his zeal to present 'every man perfect' in Christ (i. 28 ff.).[1] But this is really directed against the rival teaching, a teaching which would confine the teaching of perfection to a very small circle. The fact that this rival teaching is strictly Jewish in origin is clear from the topics enumerated in ii. 16, especially the 'new moons and sabbaths,' and also from the stress that St Paul lays in his answer on 'the circumcision of the Messiah.' The

[1] *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 462.

rules for avoiding defilement by drinking wine, which had not been carefully guarded against Gentile pollution, show that drink as well as food was included in these Jewish codes; while a reverence for Angels which might well encroach on the homage due alone to God, lay at the back of the whole system of Law, regarded as given through and regulated by Angels.

It is important to note that St Paul in dealing with this situation does not, as in Galatians, base his argument on the Old Testament. Nor, again, does he anywhere question the truth of the fundamental idea on which the rival teaching was based. For he had been brought up to believe in the reality of spiritual forces that work through the material. He accepted (Gal. iii. 19), as did Stephen, the rôle assigned to Angels in relation to the Law. Only, he had come to see in the position to which Jesus had been raised at the right hand of God—in the 'Name above every name' that had been given Him—the Cosmic significance of the Christ. Every element will in the end find its true place in subjection to Him, because in the first place it had come into being through Him. Jesus had indeed for a time been subject to human conditions in a flesh which St Paul does not scruple to call 'a flesh of sin' (Rom. viii. 3), because it is the same flesh as that in which, in our case, sin reigns. One set at least of the Principalities and Powers came into touch with Jesus, as they come into touch with us, through His physical organism, the body of His flesh.

The forces with which we have to contend in defence of our loyalty to the Will of God depend, in the last resort, on our fear of death. After bringing bodily life to an end they have nothing left that they *can* do. When we consider, in the light of these facts, all that the death of Jesus implies, we find that, according to Romans vi. 6, it involved for all who share His crucifixion, a reducing to impotence of the 'body of sin.' According to Hebrews ii. 14, by His death Jesus reduced to impotence him who had the power of death (that is, the devil), and reconciled those who by fear of death were all their life subject to bondage. In Colossians ii. 11 we read that the body of the flesh has been stripped off from the Christian by spiritual circumcision, that is, by his union with the death of Christ, which he shares with Christ in Baptism, just as in Baptism he shares His burial and resurrection. The thought that the death of Christ was indeed a spiritual circumcision is further defined in verse 16, where we read that Christ, in 'stripping' Himself of the body of His flesh on the Cross, made a show of the Principalities and Powers, the forces which strove, through the avenues of His flesh, to draw Him from His allegiance to God. By yielding His body to death He revealed their impotence and triumphed over them on the Cross. This figure recurs in iii. 9, where it is translated into language that is more intelligible to modern ears. That which we have to strip off is the 'old man.' The body of our flesh consists of our selfish habits. Our 'organized reactions' are what St Paul calls our 'members on the earth.'

When we think what is implied in the struggle to get rid of a bad habit, or to attain to a unified personality, that is, to obtain mastery over our instincts, sentiments and emotions, we may find ourselves wondering whether there is not something to be said in support of this strange Jewish conception of spiritual forces of good and evil at the back of the material world. It underlies, we must remember, not only the false teaching at Colossæ, but also St Paul's answer to it. Modern psychology has supplied us with a fresh terminology, but the battle, which we each have to fight, is as personal as St Paul conceived it, and it is difficult to believe that the forces with which we have to wrestle are only material flesh and blood after all.

III

Date and Place of Writing

The Letter was written, when St Paul was a prisoner, at the same time as the personal letter to Philemon, and the circular letter which we know as the Epistle to the Ephesians, which in all probability is the letter which St Paul tells the Colossians to expect from Laodicea. It has usually been assumed that the letters, if genuine, must come from the imprisonment which began with St Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17 ff.). Opinion has been sharply divided between those who hold that they were written from Cæsarea and those who believe that they were written from Rome. A fresh theory has been started by Pro-

fessor Deissmann, which would date them from an earlier and unrecorded imprisonment during St Paul's stay in Ephesus. While no doubt it is true that there are gaps in Luke's narrative, and that the Second Epistle to the Corinthians bears witness to sufferings which go beyond what we should infer from the account of the riot in Acts xix., yet it is extremely difficult to believe that Luke would have ignored such an imprisonment. It took place while he was in St Paul's company (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24). There are besides two strong reasons against this hypothesis. The imprisonment which St Paul was undergoing was due directly to his witness on behalf of the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ. It was of such long standing, and so well known in Christian circles everywhere, that St Paul uses the word 'prisoner' as a personal title. He is afraid that his Gentile friends may lose heart in consequence (Eph. iii. 13). The language suits admirably the imprisonment which issued in deportation to Rome, but is altogether inappropriate to an imprisonment due to a local and temporary disturbance in Ephesus. Again, even supposing that the conversion of Colossæ took place while he was in Ephesus, it seems impossible that the situation with which he has to deal could have developed in a community within a year of its conversion. Events moved very fast in the first century, but even so, the eight or ten years allowed by the later date is short for its development.

This fact and indeed all the other internal indications, seem to point to Rome as the place of origin. The effect of his imprisonment, and the opportunities that it gave to St Paul of witnessing for the gospel, fit Rome far better than either Cæsarea or Ephesus. The friendly hint that St Paul hoped to stay with Philemon when he visited Colossæ, cannot mean that he was seriously planning an early visit. If he had been, he would surely have mentioned the fact in writing to the Church.

IV

The Contents of the Epistle

After the salutation (i. 1 f.) the letter opens, according to St Paul's custom, with a Thanksgiving (i. 3-23). This expands, in preparation for the teaching that the Apostle is to give later, into a full statement of the true place of Christ in relation to the universe and the Church. The ground of thanksgiving is the report brought by Epaphras of their faith and love. It leads to prayer (9-14), in which special stress is laid on the need for spiritual discernment to recognize the will of God under all disguises, and on the power for fruit-bearing that comes from a true apprehension of His character. Then follows an exhortation to thanksgiving for the reality of their deliverance from the power of darkness and the slavery of sin. This, as we have seen, was the side of truth which the false teaching to which they were exposed practically ignored. This ignoring was rooted in a defective Christology.

St Paul therefore passes on (15-20) to expound the Cosmic significance of the Christ. He is the perfect manifestation in visible form of the essentially invisible nature of God. As 'firstborn' He is heir to the throne over all creation. For in Him and through Him and unto Him was the whole universe created, including every grade in the Angelic hierarchy. His existence is before all things, and the whole universe is coherent in virtue of the connection of any and every part of it with Him.

This, however, is not all. There is in the world a special body, the Church, the germ of the new creation. This, too, is knit together under Him as Head. In this realm also He stands first. The New Creation, like the Old, starts from Him. He was the first to rise to the New Life from the dead, so that in every sphere His supremacy might be demonstrated. For it was God's good pleasure that the complete expression (*Pleroma*)[1] of His true Being should find an abiding home in Him, and through Him win back the allegiance of the universe to Himself by making peace through the Cross, whether the rebellious spirits were on earth or in heaven. In this universal reconciliation the Colossians have their place. When the gospel found them they were alienated from God and hated Him, but now the Son of God, by taking a body of human flesh and dying in it, has won them back to their allegiance, to present them to His Father in all respects fitted to stand His searching gaze, if only they will resist the forces that strive to rob them of the hope of the gospel which has been sent to every

[1] See my note Epistle to the Ephesians *Cambridge Greek Testament*, pp. 122-127.

creature under heaven, and to which it was St Paul's privilege to minister.

After this hint of a threatening danger the Apostle goes on to explain his personal relation to the gospel, and the link that his sufferings on its behalf gave him with his correspondents, strangers though they were to one another (i. 24-ii. 3). He had a special responsibility for the particular aspect of the gospel committed to him. He was striving to open the eyes of the Gentiles to see Christ, the Hope of Glory, already present in their hearts. This was the secret of his unwearied labour to help each and all to attain to a full realization of their membership of Christ. He turns, therefore, to assure the Colossians and Laodiceans (ii. 1-3) of his prayerful interest in them. What they most needed was to be knit together in love, and to realize in common the wonderful treasures that are open to them, when they are fully convinced in their own minds that there is now nothing common or unclean, because their eyes are open to know and understand Him who is at once the secret and revelation of God; even Christ. In Him, as in a treasure house, are hidden all the stores of power and delight, needing only wisdom and knowledge to enable a man to enter in and make them his own.

This statement of the goal of his labours has a polemic bearing, as he goes on at once to show in ii. 4, 5. They were in danger of forfeiting their birthright, deluded by specious arguments. For their faith in Christ, strong as it was, was exposed, as he knew, to insidious attacks.

After this introduction there come the specific warnings and instructions which constitute the main body of the letter (ii. 6-iv. 6). He begins by asserting the complete sufficiency of faith in Jesus as Christ and Lord (ii. 6, 7) for those who live in the power of their creed. Then he establishes in detail (ii. 8-19) this all-sufficiency of Christ in opposition to a dangerous rival, to whose specious appeal there was reason to believe that they were yielding too ready an ear. We have already considered the Judaistic basis of this man's teaching. We gather (8) that he called it a 'Philosophy,' but that does not necessarily imply more than a rule of life. It was moulded, no doubt, on a particular view of the universe, but there is no evidence that its author had a theory which was meant to include all the facts of life. He seems to have had no conception that Jesus Christ was of Cosmic significance, though St Paul has to call attention to that fact in providing an antidote.

The Cosmic significance of Christ was no new discovery for St Paul, as we can see from 1 Cor. viii. 6, xv. 24-28, and Rom. viii. 38 ff. But to meet the questions raised at Colossæ, he had to work out some hitherto undeveloped implications. The rival system owed its attraction to the protection that it professed to provide against moral and spiritual defilement. He therefore sets himself to show that this system was needless and retrograde (9-15). Christ has consecrated all material things by revealing the absolute standard of holiness, nothing less than the perfect expression of the character of God in a human body on earth, and by retaining the Temple in which that revelation is enshrined, in His risen and ascended body in heaven. In consequence He has made it possible for every Christian to attain to the perfect expression of his being.

St Paul has already (i. 22) connected our reconciliation to God with the death of Christ in the body of His flesh. Here, as we have seen, he treats the stripping off of the body of the flesh as the spiritual circumcision, which all, whether Jew or Gentile, receive by their union with the death and burial and resurrection of Christ. In the case of Christ on the Cross, that stripping off of the body of the flesh exhausted the claim of the covenant of the Law, administered by Angels, and was a complete triumph over the spiritual forces that rule in unregenerate human nature, both for Himself and for us.

He proceeds therefore (16-19) to exhort them to realize their freedom from the outward discipline of restrictions in meat and drink and of special festival observances. The reality to which these shadows pointed was theirs in Christ. He warns them against letting anyone assume the position over them as umpire in the race which they were called to run, and to dictate such observances as the conditions of their training. This implied spiritual incompetence in the teacher, and the loss of all hold on Him who is our true Head, and upon our union with Whom, through the regularly appointed joints and ligaments, every part of the body depends for its supply of food and for its

organic coherence, if it is to grow in the power of its Divine life.

He goes on (ii. 20-iii. 4) to point out the practical consequences of the realization of our union with the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Union with His death (ii. 20-23) carries with it emancipation from the forces that lie behind the material universe, and from absorption in external ordinances and regulations. Union with His resurrection (iii. 1-2) should carry with it an absorption in spiritual rather than in material considerations. Knit into one with Christ, men should live and move and have their being, not merely as the world does, by a physical necessity, but with full consciousness in God. It is for the moment a life of which the man of the world can have no appreciation. But the day will come when the veil shall be withdrawn, and Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, and we with Him in glory.

St Paul then shows (iii. 5-17) the work that has to be done by anyone who wishes to make his own, by resolute acts of his own will, the new life won for him by Christ. It is first negative. It involves the deliberate doing to death of the evil habits to which we have been enslaved in the past, and which constitute, as it were, different limbs of the body of our flesh. These consist not only of the self-indulgent appetites, but also of darker forms of evil, whereby a man seeks to harm his neighbour. For this is what it means to strip off our old nature and to put on the new, which is continually being refreshed and regenerated, so that we grow in moral insight as we grow in the Divine likeness after which we were created, in that new nature in which all the old distinctions which kept men apart are for ever transcended. For Christ covers the whole field and reveals Himself in every part of it.

In verses 12-17 he describes some of the new habits which the Christian has to form in more detail. First, the motive supplied by the new revelation of the relation in which we stand to God, as 'chosen by Him' 'set apart for His service,' 'the object of His love.' Then the new ideal of character: sensitive to the sufferings of others and ready to help; guarding against self-conceit and self-assertion; meeting personal injuries, not only with forbearance, but also with free forgiveness, after the example of the Lord; culminating in love, binding all the members of the body together, the test and sign of spiritual maturity. As to guiding principles in conduct and conversation, the peace of Christ must be arbiter in every question of heart and conscience. The peace that He has made among men He has made binding upon us by calling us to live as members of a body. We refuse therefore to judge our brother if we think him too free, or to scorn his scruples if we think him too strict, while we live in a spirit of thankfulness for all the gifts we enjoy. In ordinary intercourse with one another, the word of Christ, whether speaking in the heart of the believer or through the mouth of his brethren, should be a welcome guest. Instructions and admonitions will spring naturally out of aspirations after God which find expression in Psalms and Hymns and Odes. The golden rule for every act and word is to realize that the Christian represents Christ in the world, and his whole life should be a thanksgiving to God through Him.

St Paul then passes on to apply these principles (iii. 18-iv. 1) to the fundamental relations of home life: to the relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, servants and masters, expanding the latter with special care because the slave element was proportionally large in early Christian communities. He adds (iv. 2-6) two words in conclusion on their personal relations to God and to the world. Watch your prayer life, not forgetting to intercede for me, and for my witness in my bonds to the secret of the Christ which has been committed to me. In your relations to the world outside, use your common-sense and tact in looking out for opportunities to commend your message.

The LETTER ends (iv. 7-16) with commending Tychicus, the bearer of the Letter, and Onesimus, who was returning to his master, Philemon (7-9). Then come the greetings from St Paul's companions, including a special message from Epaphras, reinforcing the main message of the Letter; a message to Laodicea, and to Archippus, who seems to have been the son of Philemon and to have held an official position in the Church, most probably in Laodicea (15-17). It closes with St Paul's signature.

J. O. F. MURRAY

Two Environments

Col. i. 2.—'To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.'

St Paul finds that simply to address his letter to those in Colossæ is altogether too vague, and so he adds, 'To those in Colossæ who are in Christ—saints, brothers, trusty.' The men, it seems, had these two environments, these two domiciles. Their dwellings were in such and such a street of that ancient city; their names appeared on its register as labourers, or pedlars, or men of means—like their one notable person, Philemon; and as such the world knew them. But there was another sphere in which they moved. When the street door was closed a postern door was opened; and these people passed out and up to take their place in a spiritual fraternity, not confined to any single province, but represented in all the cities of the Mediterranean, and with members already in the heaven of God. They were in Colossæ, but they also were in Christ; and one could not know them fully unless he took account of both.

It is a familiar idea that we belong to more worlds than one. The conditions of a man's business life may be very dull: he has to sit squarely hour by hour on a high stool, entering in a ledger items of no intrinsic interest; and, if that is his whole existence, the springs of freshness in his mind will soon run dry. But nearly every one finds other interests, in study, or amusement, or affection, and by these the richness and variety of his nature may be preserved.

¶ One of the most famous of all Frenchmen—Montaigne—appeared to his neighbours as an easy-going squire and country gentleman, fond of gossip and not abashed by the broadest of rustic stories. But up two stairs in his little château he had his books, five shelves of them running round the room; and upon the walls and cross-beams and rafters of his library there were painted texts from his favourite writers, so that wherever the dancing firelight chanced to fall, some word would start out in clearness, as if the silent room were talking. It was the combination of these two environments which made the man we know.

The Apostle himself belonged to many different kingdoms of thought and feeling, and sometimes he speaks out of one of these and sometimes from another. With undisguised pride he says, 'I am a Hebrew and born of Hebrews,' and every one in whom the patriotic sense is alive will sympathize. Again he says, 'I am of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city,' and in the very words he betrays the fondness with which he remembered the stir of life in that dear native town, the throng of traders and the mob of university students. Then he had a grander environment which so stirred his imagination as to affect his entire ministry: I am a Roman citizen, he could say, born free, and no man dare lay a scourge on me. The whole romance of empire is in his tone; and we cannot but go with him, for this romance is one of the potent influences in our life, and in many homely British people it corrects the balance of their trivial days. But he claimed a yet more august environment: 'Our citizenship is in heaven,' he says. The other worlds failed him one by one: the Synagogue cast him out, his kindred in Tarsus disowned him, and he came to lie under sentence in a Roman dungeon, but this heavenly citizenship sustained him through it all, and kept his temper sweet and sanguine still. In a life so full of change and accident, it is surely good to know of a support which cannot betray, and these obscure Christians, as well as Paul, had attained to that. They were in Colossæ, but they were also in Christ.

1. How do these two worlds affect each other? It is useful to repeat that *they are not alternatives*. That was the monastic notion; if you are to be in the city you cannot be in religion, for that has its place in the convent, up among the hills; but such a view had never any countenance from Jesus or His Apostles. Speaking to men at their work, with people always about them and a clamour of duties, they said, Since your life is in the city you only the more urgently need some source of life above the city, and it is yours for the taking. It is mournful to see how often, as men grow busier and richer, they become less religious: they are seldom at church, they give up prayers at home, they cease to read the kind of books which fed their souls before. Their error lies in making a choice, as if it were not possible to have a part in both; and yet the Christian witness is that '*all* things are yours,' even the world, and things present as well as things to come.

The same blunder is committed from the other side by some pious people who, because they are in Christ, refuse to think or to do anything for the city. They are terribly in dread of being contaminated, and thus they are of little use. In fairness it should be said that others than the pious conceive of life in a narrow and selfish way. When Montaigne was invited to be mayor of Bordeaux, he professed his willingness to take the town's business 'on his hands but not on his heart and his liver.' But that was never Jesus' way. He took nothing on hand without taking it on His heart as well: the evil from which others turned as no concern of theirs appealed directly to Him. He did not idly wish that God would somehow send a better time, He bent Himself to making all times better, and in this He would have us follow Him. Since we are in Colossæ we only the more urgently need to be in Christ; and if we are in Christ, He asks that, in some more effective sense than in the past, we should be in Colossæ. The two are not alternatives, but together they compose a deliberately Christian life.

¶ To move among the people on the common street; to meet them in the market-place on equal terms; to live among them not as saint or monk, but as brother-man with brother-man; to bear the burdens of society and relieve its needs; to carry on the multitudinous activities of the city — social, commercial, political, philanthropic—in Christ's spirit and for His ends: this is the religion of the Son of Man.[1]

¶ At one extremity of the vegetable world the air-plant and orchid, ethereal things usually far up in the high forest trees, draw their nourishment from the dew and light of the blue heavens in which they are embosomed, and apparently glance superciliously upon the earth far below, with which they are little concerned; whilst at the other end of the scale are those Alpine plants known as geophytes, from the fact that the chief portion of their existence is spent underground. The godly are duplicates neither of the air-plant aloof in the heights, spurning the ground, nor of the geophyte buried in the dust; rather do they answer to the lovely plants of the temperate zone, which, at one and the same time, take firm hold of the earth and drink in the celestial influences of sun and shower, starring the landscape with their beauty, filling the air with their sweetness.[1]

[1] Henry Drummond.

2. They do not idly lie together, but *work upon each other*. The Christianity is redeemed from dreaminess and finds outlet in the citizenship, and the citizenship, in its turn, is exalted and enlarged by the Christian faith.

Colossæ was a backgoing place. Once it had been populous and splendid; but ten miles down the strath two cities had sprung up and sucked its life away. Laodicea had captured the trade, and the law courts had followed, and it was now the immensely prosperous capital of the province. And across the valley from Laodicea, on a sunny shelf, stood the now forgotten town of Hierapolis, of which Paul speaks in this letter. Hot springs had been discovered there, to which doctors sent their wealthy patients, and it became a fashionable resort. There was continual coming and going between the three towns, so that it was easy for Paul's friend Epaphras to minister to all of them; but Colossæ was the unprosperous sister, where people had to live largely on tradition. They took an interest in philosophy, as Paul's letter shows, and they leaned to a sort of ascetic rigour which suited their small incomes. It was in Colossæ that Paul had to warn his readers against making too much of negative rules—'Do not taste, or handle, or even touch'; for there, as in many Christian communities nearer home, one might have fancied that the chief point in a good life is the number of things a man *refrains* from doing, instead of the number of good things which he does. This faded and declining city was the one environment, and it persistently affected their lives. The prevailing slackness touched them and made them slack, just as in Laodicea the prevailing busyness might make men indifferent to God.

But these people were 'in Christ,' says the Apostle. Just as a bird lives in the air and needs the air to live in, so, in Paul's view, a Christian man requires the presence of his Master; and if that is withdrawn, he must speedily die. Nothing in a Christian life can be fully understood if this be ignored, for what a disciple does is largely a part of what His Lord is doing. Christ's courage makes him brave, Christ's fidelity makes him faithful,

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Shepherd of the Sea*, 188.

Christ's diligence makes him work more strenuously; for the one environment is every whit as real and overmastering as the other. It is not an idle flourish of words when he says (Phil. i. 8), 'God is my witness, how I long after you all in *the heart of Jesus Christ*.' Paul's love for them was, as it were, enfolded in the wonderful love of Christ, which was before his and would be after his, which reached away to right and left, including his and John's and a hundred other loves besides. My love, he said, is 'in the heart of Jesus Christ'; and in such surroundings it could never flag, but would become, as years passed, more like Christ's own.

¶ A minister who visited Korea asked his congregation there to renounce a certain habit, and sought a show of hands from those who would make the sacrifice. Only a few responded, and he was disappointed. But the missionary, who knew the people, suggested that next night, instead of asking response from those who *would do* the thing, he should ask for evidence of those who *had done* it, and every hand was lifted! The fact that they were in Christ Jesus had without any commandment taught them how they were to live in Korea.[1]

Paul here refers to the effect this nobler environment produced on the Colossians; 'in Christ they were saints,' he says, 'and brothers, and trusty.' He does not mean that they were entirely good and holy men, but that they had changed sides, passing over from the world of opposition to Jesus Christ, and committing themselves to His way of pureness. That was an enormous change, and it was Jesus who had achieved it. And in Christ they now were brethren. That word is often nothing better than a bit of pious slang, but in Colossæ we come on a fine instance of what it ought to mean. One member of that Church was Philemon, a rich man, whose slave Onesimus had robbed him and then escaped. Paul lighted upon the runaway at Rome, and made a new man of him, and sent him home to accept whatever his justly indignant master might impose. A Christian must pay his debts, and he must not refuse to suffer what he has deserved; and on that footing Onesimus went. But to Philemon Paul wrote, You are getting your servant back a different man, who will no longer give you a slave's bad and heartless work, but will serve you with intelligence and good-will. He has done that for me in Rome, and he will do the same for you; what of your attitude to him? And thus Christ strikes in, quieting the master's anger, and quickening the servant's conscience, so as to transform their whole relation.

¶ Excavations in the cemetery of St Priscilla in Rome have brought to light confirmation, not only of an heroic death, but of a Christian life whose witness-bearing was not in vain. A little circle of graves of freedmen and slaves surrounds the tomb of their master, Acilius Glabrio, who was consul in A.D. 91 under the Emperor Domitian. These all bear the marks of Christian faith. Arraigned by the Emperor as 'a deviser of new things,' Glabrio was sent into banishment, and eventually put to death. Such a personality in Rome was a light which could not be hid under a bushel. He was a member of that aristocratic group in Rome who, under the preaching of Paul, or those whom he had converted, became Christians, and had the courage not merely to die for their faith but to practise it. The gospel opened their hearts and hands. They recognized the brotherhood of slaves. They not only helped them in their hard lot while living, but, when dead, offered them the hospitality of their tomb. The Priscilla Cemetery is an outstanding witness to this new spirit of comradeship between rich and poor which Christ had introduced into the world.[1]

Perhaps the most remarkable effect of all is that 'in Christ they now were trusty.' They came of a shockingly bad stock. They were slack, craven, shifty, untrustworthy. That was where Christ found them; but under His tutoring a new manliness began to appear and a touch of conscience in word and work. In Christ they grew to be trusty, which was a supreme achievement. Thus, in a definite instance, we are shown what the power of this second environment may be, and how it breaks in upon the first and transforms character.

[1] W. Y. Fullerton, *God's High Way*, 65.

[1] A. G. Mackinnon, *The Rome of St Paul*, 106.

Christian Love

Col. i. 3-8.—'We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints . . . as ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant . . . who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.'

St Paul usually begins his letters to the Churches with words of thanksgiving and praise. He thanks God for the stability of the Roman Church. He recognizes with thankfulness the Corinthians' spiritual gifts of knowledge and of utterance. In the case of his friends at Philippi, he thanks God for their fellowship in the gospel 'from the first until now.' What were the words of praise for the Church at Colossæ? He thanks God for their love. Epaphras, their faithful minister who knew them well, had just confirmed what the Apostle had already heard—their love to all the saints.

The Colossian Church, then, was remarkable for this, the highest of all Christian graces and virtues. They were noted for their love to all Christian people, not only for their mutual loving-kindness to one another but for something wider and larger, for their love to all the saints. It is worth while to consider what actually and practically this meant. There is little doubt that it was the welcome and hospitality that the Christians at Colossæ showed to those who visited or passed through their town.

1. There was a great deal of travelling throughout the Roman Empire. In those days it was far commoner, and far more easy and safe under a strong, settled, civilized Roman government, than it is to-day. People passed easily on the great Roman roads on their business or their pleasure. There were lecturers who travelled about, and entertainers who went from place to place, just as travelling theatrical companies do to-day, and Colossæ was on one of the great routes. There is no question that Christians, like other people, travelled a great deal at this time. We realize this better if we reflect that the Christian Churches of the first century consisted very largely indeed of the urban, commercial, middle classes. From the very first, and always, the Christian faith has known how to touch and win men of all classes. We know that in the first century of the Christian era there were a few distinguished people who became Christians, and we know also that the Christian faith did touch and did win from time to time the slave, and a very large part of that ancient society was servile. Yet there is no doubt that the great majority of those who belonged to the early Christian Church were of the urban, commercial, middle classes. As we study St Paul's Epistles we see at once that they must have been addressed to well-educated people. That is true of the Apostolic writings generally, for instance, of the Epistle to the Hebrews. One knows from the term 'pagans' that it was quite a long time before the country people were touched by Christianity, for the 'pagans' mean merely the countrymen. Long after the towns had become Christian the countrymen remained in their own primitive faiths, so the term *pagani* came to mean what we now understand by pagans, non-Christians. The nearest approach in modern days to the presentation of the gospel to the Romano-Greek world in the first century is the presentation of the gospel to-day in Japan. India hardly counts: the whole system of caste so profoundly modifies the whole situation. In Japan to-day you have very few converts among the official or really wealthy classes, and the country people are still practically untouched. So far as the Christian Church has won converts in Japan it has been mainly among the urban business population. If we once realize that the Christian Church at this time in Colossæ, Ephesus, and Philippi mainly consisted of business people, and remember how travelling took place, we shall understand that Christians in those days were travelling a great deal, not only on evangelistic missions, but also in the ordinary conduct of business.

There were, too, practically no hostelries in these days, and such as existed must have afforded but undesirable quarters. So, as Christian men went on their way conducting their ordinary business, they naturally sought for and found welcome in the houses and homes of their fellow-Christians. That accounts for the great stress laid in the apostolic writings upon the virtue of hospitality. A bishop must be given to hospitality. If a woman is to be put on the number of the church widows, one of the conditions is that she should have lodged strangers. Or, again, in the Third Epistle of St John:

'Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers, which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well. Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.' We may remember, too, instances in the Acts of the Apostles, where St Paul found great hospitality on his journeys. There is the case of Mnason of Cyprus, or Philip, the deacon and evangelist with whom he lodged at Cæsarea. No doubt that is what the Colossian Church had actually been doing; that was the way in which they showed their love not only to the brethren of Colossæ, but to Christians who passed on their way.

2. Are we to understand that Christian love is merely a diffusive benevolence? No, it is a kind of attitude towards human life which, when it sees a thing to be done, goes and does it. It is the very opposite to that kind of sentimentalism which is so well represented by the principles of the sentimentalist, the French Rousseau, of whom it was said, 'This lover of his kind is the hater of his kin.'

¶ In the early days of the New Guinea Mission there was a rocky point upon which shipwrecks often took place. The Mission, out of their slender resources, put up a simple little beacon light, a very small lighthouse, to save the men who were seafaring. It was not exactly the business of the Mission to maintain a lighthouse, and no doubt the structure they put up was a very poor one, but it was a great deal better than nothing. It has been replaced now by something much more effective. That, however, was Christian love.

Where a social service has to be rendered it is Christian love that does it. It was the Church that first cared for the poor. It was the Church that first cared for education. It was the Church that first realized that mere punishment was not enough in dealing with the weaker and less fortunate of our brethren. Now, quite rightly and justly, the State is coming in and taking over this work, but it was the Christian conscience that felt the need first. That is what has been going on right down the ages.

¶ Billed to speak, in 1922, in a certain town far distant from Manchester, on social questions, I got a letter, a few days before the meeting, asking me to appeal for workers for the 'Play Centres' for poor children, for 'it is little to the credit of the churches that we should be so short of helpers.' I wrote asking for an interview, and then asked the lady responsible for the letter why she looked to the churches for workers for a type of work which most of the churches were already doing week by week the year round. Surely, I said, it would be more reasonable for her to seek support for her non-sectarian work from people not connected with any place of worship. She replied, with great scorn, that I could not know much of life if I expected any help from that quarter. I did not expect it. But I did not tell her so.

Not long after, speaking in quite another part of England, I was asked to appeal for workers for the *Civic League of Help*. The writer said: 'You would think that this kind of work, being wholly unsectarian and non-political, would appeal to those who cannot accept the dogmas of the churches. But we have to depend altogether on the churches for our workers.'[1]

Christian love is far from a mere sentiment of general benevolence. It is a kind of attitude towards all human life which sees what needs doing and gets on with it. And this attitude was something new and strange. The world had never seen the like before. It is very instructive to compare the apostolic writings, for instance, with the flower of Greek ethical culture, as is to be seen in the ethics of Aristotle. The character that he obviously looks upon favourably is that of the man whom he describes as being a great-souled man. That is the idea, and there is much to be said for the great-souled man. He is strong, he is determined, he is independent, he is courageous, he is prudent. But he is quite prepared to trample on those who get in his way if they deserve it, and he enjoys doing it. He is a man of the world, and he knows his own world to the full. He is a man who in any period of the world's history is always effective. Yet one feels that there is something in Christian love and Christian humanity which he entirely lacks.

Christian love, then, came as something strange, hitherto unknown. The second-cen-

[1] Canon Peter Green.

tury satirist, Lucian, speaks of the Christians as a foolish, simple, easy-going people, easily taken in and deluded, just the kind of people an impostor like Peregrinus would make a good thing out of. Christian loving-kindness was a new thing, and seemed to be the sheerest folly. It was not utilitarian. It was not the result of an elaborate system of ethical philosophy. It had its roots deeper than that because it was the instinctive response of all that is best and truest in human nature to a new vision. Paul writes surpassingly of charity. John gives us a treatise on Christian love which has been called the Handbook of the Saints. These men had seen a vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Whatever other judgment we pass upon Paul we must admit that he was one of the supreme intellects of the age, and the one thing in which he gloried was the cross of Christ. Yes, it was a new vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If God so loved us, then should we love one another. It was a new vision of the supreme Reality, of the fact that in God there is such loving-kindness that He will place Himself by our side and He will suffer with us and for us. Christian love is the instinctive response of all that is truest and best in our nature to a new vision of God. And this thing so high, so deep, comes down and cheerfully does the nearest practical duty that lies to its hand.

¶ I went out one morning in early winter to feed our cattle and horses in the barn, and found to my horror that a fearful storm in the night had blown the barn down with almost everything we possessed in it. It was such a wreck as I had never seen. I can remember now the way I felt as I ran through the neighbourhood to call the men together to see if we could save anything. The news went fast, and before the day was over men from near and far gathered in our yard. They were all hard-working people like ourselves, with little wealth beyond their own strong hands. But before they separated they had decided to go to work at once and replace what the storm had destroyed. The entire neighbourhood went to work, and a new structure rose where the ruin had been.

It was a simple deed, which perhaps many towns could parallel, but it affected me in a strange way. I saw, as I had not seen before, that the religion of these men was not merely an affair of the meeting-house; not merely a way to get to heaven. It was something which made them thoughtful of others and ready to sacrifice for others. I saw how it worked itself out in practical deeds of kindness and righteousness. During those days that I worked in the cold of a Maine winter, among those men with their rough clothes and hard hands, I was helping build more than a barn; I was forming a wider view of the religion which such men as these were living by.[1]

The Knowledge of God

Col. i. 9.—'For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.'

The main point of St Paul's prayer for the Colossians was that they might be 'filled with the knowledge of his will.' The Apostle was praying for the intellectual enlightenment of those people who had so lately become Christian and were so surrounded by danger.

1. The knowledge that is spoken of means, according to Lightfoot, 'full knowledge'—'that ye may be filled with the full knowledge of his will.' The full knowledge of His will would include all things—the universe and the whole trend and purpose of human affairs. But we may ask: Is knowledge, as we read of it in the New Testament, the same as the intellectual faculty we read of in philosophy? That it is so is proved by the further definitions that the Apostle gives of knowledge. 'In all *sophia*'—'wisdom.' 'Wisdom' is the mental excellence of the highest and best minds, like Plato's or Newton's or Kant's. According to the definition of the Stoics, it is knowledge of Divine things, and human things, and of their causes. It would be well for us, when we are inclined to depreciate the intellectual side of religion, to remember that Paul prayed for men that they might have it. And then he adds 'in all *sunesis*'—'understanding.' And in the parallel passage in the Ephesians the word '*phronesis*' is added; '*sunesis*' is the critical faculty, the faculty by which we apprehend the bearing of things, and '*phronesis*' is the practical faculty,

[1] R. M. Jones, *Finding the Trail of Life*, 122.

the faculty by which we bring to bear upon action the truth that the mind has grasped. The greater part of what is called wickedness is simple stupidity, want of thought. The great bulk of evil in the world is the work of stupid people who need not be stupid. It is folly that they could be rid of, if they would only think. If they would use their mental powers, such as they are, they would not be wicked. The Apostle's prayer is that we may have knowledge. It goes on: 'In every good work bearing fruit, and increasing in the knowledge of God,' showing that our growth in practical, fruitful life, our expansion as personalities, is due to the knowledge of God. The alert and eager mind that 'follows on to know the Lord' is the effective worker in this, and in all worlds.

¶ After a visit to the Society of Methodists in Norwich, John Wesley wrote in his diary, 'I find no people like those of Norwich; they are eminently unstable as water. Last year we had two hundred—sixty-nine are gone already. What a blessing is knowledge when sanctified! What stability can be expected without it? Let their affections be ever so lively, yet what hold can you have on a people who neither know books, nor men, nor themselves, nor the Bible, neither material nor spiritual things.'

¶ 'Beware of untheological devotion,' says Bishop Moule. If devotion is to be real it should be characterized by *thought*. There is no contradiction between mind and heart, between theology and devotion. Devotional hours do not mean hours when thought is absent. Meditation is not abstraction, nor is devotion dreaminess. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *mind*' is an essential part of the commandment. If genuine thought and equally genuine theology do not characterize our hours of devotion, we lose some of the most precious opportunities of grace and blessing. A piety which is mere pietism, an evangelicalism which does not continually ponder the profound truths of the New Testament, can never be strong or do any deep service.[1]

2. But the agnostic says that the knowledge of God is just what is hidden from us, and it is a very common supposition that the brainiest people are they who do not know God. Is it a mark of intellectual power to be ignorant of God? Is this claim of agnosticism to mental superiority to be allowed? Why is it ever made? It is made, of course, because we depreciate the intellectual in our religious life, and in our religious worship. The consequence is that the notion gets abroad that the thinker must be a sceptic, and that only the uneducated and superstitious will be believers. We ought to make it clear that the knowledge of God is not only possible but obligatory. We ought to show that no system of philosophy can stand which leaves out the knowledge of God, that it always crumbles to pieces, and is discovered to be without the necessary foundation. It is a common observation that very ignorant people who know God are more intelligent and more practically wise than the wisest people who do not know Him. But, indeed, the wisest people always do know God. Look into antiquity—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; these were the wisest, the masters of those that know, and they all knew God. Look at the great masters of modern science—Clerk Maxwell, Faraday, Lord Kelvin—and they all knew God.

¶ Michael Pupin, surely one of the greatest of living scientists, lay as a boy dreaming in the pasture lands of his native village. Through the night he tended his herd, and his eager soul was stirred by the sight of the stars, those mysterious lanterns of the sky. And when there came floating up to him across the morning mists the sound of the church bells in the village far below, calling the devout peasants to prayer, again his soul was stirred within him. In after years he set himself to a life-long study of those marvellous commonplaces, light and sound. And now, from the height of his maturity and fame, he tells us that light and sound are like the vesper bells of his native village, messengers of God calling us to His altar that we may praise His everlasting glory.[1]

Let us look for a moment at St Augustine. He is a typical man. Wandering in early youth into all the snares of degradation, of vice, and yet living to write the books which moulded the thought of Europe for a thousand years, this man, if any, must be ranked among the greatest—and he had no doubt that this knowledge of God is a matter of immediate personal experience. There is much to learn, and much to know about God, hence Paul's prayer; but the knowledge of God is given. It is part of our

[1] W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Prayers of St Paul*, 70.

[1] *Record of Christian Work*, Aug. 1929.

human equipment; it is a matter of immediate and personal experience.

¶ Helen Keller was born without sight and without hearing. Her communication with the outward world was established only by feeling and by taste until she was taught by a devoted friend, and it became possible to communicate with her, and for her to communicate with others and to write some of the most beautiful literature of our time. When she was just beginning to understand, Bishop Phillips Brooks was asked to come and teach her religion; and he taught her what God was, explained exactly all that we know about God; and then Helen Keller said with beautiful simplicity: 'But I knew that all along, only I didn't know the Name.'

3. But an objection may come from the other side. It is, perhaps, only the great intellects that know God. All common minds, like the beasts that perish, live in ignorance of the knowledge which is 'the master-mind of all our seeing.' God might choose only to reveal Himself to the poets, the thinkers, the artists; He might select His society amongst these; and it might quite properly be maintained that common people are shut out from the knowledge of God, 'so brutish are they and ignorant.' How incredibly rapid is the enemy of souls—the spirit that denies! How he leaps in a moment from one end to the other of possibility. If it is said that the knowledge of God is only the delusion of the ignorant—the wise don't know—and it is answered that it is exactly the wise that do know, immediately the spirit that denies flies to the opposite extreme and says, Perhaps the wise know, but the rest do not; the common people cannot know God. But, as Gwatkin has said, when he has examined all the methods by which God is known, here is the secret. It requires no uncommon capacities, but the whole range of the common capacities of common men to know God. There is no excuse for us.

Now this seems to be the plain fact when you come to look at human nature, and to look at the world through human nature, and we can only look at it through that medium. Let anyone observe the universe, and he observes the marks of order, power, beauty and progress. Let him include in the universe the human nature to which he belongs, the spiritual nature of man, the historical development of humanity upon the earth; and, as he looks straight at it all, he finds he is absolutely compelled to assume that the power behind Nature is rational, and that, in the main, it must be good. Because if you cannot assume that the purpose is good, it would all be madness. As, therefore, man looks straight at the universe, including the humanity to which he belongs, there are two things that come quietly up into consciousness. First, the great fact of the ordered universe, which impresses him with the feeling and the knowledge that there is a Divine mind, and a Divine will that moves it on its mighty course. Then, if he reflects whether that force is morally good and loving, immediately he is brought up to another argument that the scheme of things presents. For here are human beings, and in this human life which he shares he becomes aware of the element of goodness, of love, of truth, of righteousness and of justice; and as he becomes aware of it, he is conscious of the conflict within him, that conflict which ever proceeds between the higher and the lower, and he must determine in his own mind which within represents the Divine authority. And at that point he is thrust forward—by faith, let us call it—to the great inevitable conclusion. This good within is the Maker; this good within is God, and with this love, this righteousness, this truth, this purity, I side. It is a venture of faith, we know. 'Unless you will believe you will not understand,' says Augustine. There is a point in the search for truth where knowledge comes to the edge of the precipice; yet there is clearly the beyond, and faith must pass beyond the understanding—the precipice on which we are placed. And thus the knowledge of God is inevitable, as we throw open the faculties of our being to the impress and message of things. It requires thought—all the thought of which we are capable; it requires all the faculties we possess. But then a man ought to think and ought to use his faculties; and when he thinks and uses his faculties there is the knowledge of God.

Knowledge by Prayer

Col. i. 9.—'Filled with the knowledge of his will.'

We are made to know Christ, and He seeks to know us. We ought, then, to know Him better than we know our best friend; He even expects us to place Him first in our regard, otherwise we cannot be classed as among His disciples. How then is it that our knowledge is so superficial? It is due largely to the fact that we make so little use of prayer. As soon as we apprend what the knowledge is that we are seeking to obtain, we see that prayer must be necessarily the chief means for obtaining it. For this knowledge implies personal communion. It is not like the knowledge of a great historical character, which depends for its fullness on the number of facts that can be obtained and verified; it is as open to the simple and ignorant as to the clever and wise, and grows through companionship. The life of this companionship in the spiritual world is what we call prayer, for prayer is the exercise of the soul in its endeavour to find and know God.

It may be objected that the knowledge of persons is hindered by absence, and that this is an especial difficulty with regard to the knowledge of God. But there are various ways of overcoming this, and one can easily imagine that if the correspondence of two friends who never saw one another were perfectly free and unconstrained, it might establish a friendship of a purer, higher character than that which is made by constant visits. The thought and care which correspondence demands, the desire to give pleasure and happiness which animates it, the opportunity it gives to the writer to say what he could not frame his tongue to repeat, are all in favour of a man giving his best to his friend in his letter. The telephone and wireless telegraphy suggest to the imagination the possibility that without even letters a friendship might be formed. All that is really necessary is that in some way we may communicate our thoughts to our friend, and may have his in return. This is what we understand by prayer.

But men pray more or less, and yet comparatively few know Christ. It seems as though prayer failed in its purpose. But do we not know that correspondence, and even interviews, may entirely fail in obtaining knowledge of people? How many are of a purely business character, in which the personal element does not enter at all. The writers, in many cases, do not wish to know their correspondents. They desire some advantage or help, and are satisfied when they get it. And is not this the character of many prayers? There is no thought of communion or fellowship, but a sense of need or danger which God will supply or save us from. As to the character of Him to whom we pray, we are no wiser after prayer than before.

¶ The last and highest result of prayer is not the securing of this or that gift, the avoiding of this or that danger. The last and highest result of prayer is the knowledge of God—the knowledge which is eternal life; and by that knowledge the transformation of human character and of the world.[1]

1. The first thing necessary is to look upon prayer as being chiefly means of intercourse with Christ. But this means thought; for our letters to friends are not confined to our needs; indeed, we are rather ashamed to mention them, lest we should be supposed to be simply writing for selfish purposes. We feel that our friendship, or rather our sense of the value to us of our friend's friendship, is imperilled by many petitions. We like him to feel that we care for him for what he is, not for what he gives. It must not be otherwise in our prayers to our Lord. It is true that we are encouraged to lay every need before Him; but that generous care for our circumstances must not be abused.

It is not prayer,
  This clamour of our eager wants
That fills the air
  With wearying selfish plaints.

It is true prayer
  To seek the Giver more than gifts;
God's life to share
  And love—for this our cry to lift.

Petition is the most elementary of all kinds of prayer. And it is because we so seldom rise above the rudiments and first principles of Divine things that we so seldom think about prayer in any other sense than in that of request and petition and supplication. Whereas

[1] G. J. Blewett, *The Christian View of the World*, 249.

thanksgiving and praise — pure, enraptured, adoring praise—are the most perfect of all kinds of prayer.[1]

¶ It is unfortunately too true that prayer is most commonly associated with the idea of *getting* something; whereas thanksgiving, as its name betrays, means the *giving* of something—it is an act of sacrifice. It is indeed a sad consideration how few are 'found to give glory to God' among all the recipients of His grace. Thanksgiving, one would suppose, would be spontaneous and inevitable.

I do but sing because I must,

said Tennyson. But how few Christians manifest the spontaneity of the linnet's song, and sing because they must. How few ever have a heart so bursting with grateful emotion that they must withdraw to some solitude where their tears of praise may overflow, and their swelling gratitude find relief in adoration and thanksgiving.[2]

We need, then, to think carefully of what we are going to say. Even with a valued earthly friend we think of our correspondent, of what will interest him. It may be that we have heard how some one appreciated something he said or did, or how his counsel was needed in some difficulty, or of some gift that we have recently received. It is in this spirit of thoughtful care for Him to whom we are about to speak that we should prepare for prayer. A wise leader in the devotional life has said that if we had but three minutes for prayer, two should be spent in realizing God's presence. That is a much-needed caution; but that realization should carry with it the further thought of what we desire to say. What are the subjects of which we shall speak? Of what will He like to hear? It is true we can tell Him nothing new; but does a father feel no interest in his child's letter because he knows so well its subject? It is not information that he looks for, but the affection which prompts the child to write, and the development of character which his letter reveals. So with us. We must not only think what our prayers are to ourselves, but what they are to Him.

2. A good model is the next essential for prayer, and this we have in the Lord's Prayer. Our early familiarity with it ought to have taught us how to frame our prayers. It is surely significant that the first petition concerns the Divine name, that is His character, that we should be taught to think of Him before we think of ourselves. It is the method that one friend would certainly adopt with another. Some expression of affection, some desire that his correspondent might be more widely known and appreciated would naturally find a first place. 'Hallowed be thy name' is the language of intelligent and reverent devotion, but the devotion of a friend rather than that of a servant. So, too, the end of the Prayer. How natural it is for us to conclude our letters with expressions of confidence, trust and affection, especially if we have had occasion to ask for some help. We wish our friend to feel that now that we have put the matter into his hands we have no further anxiety. We trust Him entirely.

The order of the direct petitions suggests the same feeling. In proportion as we care for our friend, we care for his interests rather than our own. 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' is suggestive of intelligent friendship. It is not different with the two petitions which follow, which are confined to essential needs. The stranger, the servant, seek for something more than is absolutely necessary. Bread will not content them. The friend, on the other hand, only mentions a pressing need. So, too, the plea for forgiveness, on the ground that we are trying to catch and exhibit His own generous spirit, is just that which friendship would develop. From this we may learn much of the spirit of prayer.

Not only in the Lord's Prayer, but also in the Collects of the Prayer Book there are valuable models which, if carefully considered, must lead not only to an orderly framework of prayer, but also an expressive language. The attributes which preface the Church's prayers, such as Almighty, Everlasting, Creator and Preserver of all mankind; the noble foundations on which faith builds up her expectation, as in the words, 'The Author of peace and Lover of concord,' when we are asking for peace; or the words, 'Whom truly to know is everlasting life,' when we are asking for knowledge: all these supply helps in the framing of our prayers which we shall do well to make use of. But not slavishly. We must

[1] A. Whyte, *Lord, Teach us to pray*, 157.
[2] C. Silvester Horne, *The Life that is Easy*, 147.

not become mere imitators, but rather intelligent users of the examples supplied us. He, then, that would enter into communion with a living Lord, must catch the spirit and expression of those who themselves have known the Lord, and from a long experience in prayer know how they may best speak with Him.

But are we not taught by our Lord to pray to the Father rather than to Himself? And if all our devotions are concentrated upon the Father, then how will there grow up that reverent, intimate fellowship with Christ which we are to cultivate? It is, of course, undeniable that our Lord usually points men to the Father. They are to ask the Father in His Name, and He will do what they ask, but it is that 'the Father may be glorified in the Son.' Though the Father is to be the ultimate goal of the disciples' thoughts, it is quite clear that the Lord never expected that the intimate fellowship which they had enjoyed with Him was to cease. His illustrations of Communion, abiding, eating, clearly imply that it is to be even fuller than it was before. And this the Apostles expected. It was natural for Stephen to turn to his Lord in his last hour, natural for Paul always to look to Him in his needs and distresses.

3. Our knowledge of the Lord, then, very largely depends on prayer, prayer independently of any replies which it may obtain. And we have seen that it must be prefaced and sustained by earnest thought. It is needless to say that this means effort, and very earnest effort. That is part of the cost which we must pay for the knowledge of the Lord. We do not hesitate to give it, and give it freely, to our earthly friends, for whom we undertake strange tasks, learning languages and difficult arts; shall we then doubt about bestowing it generously on the Son of God?

¶ 'No one is likely to do much at prayer,' wrote Bishop Hamilton, in words often quoted, 'who does not look upon it as a work to be prepared for and entered upon with all the serious earnestness which a difficult task demands.'

The habit that clings to us that we can only pray when kneeling is one of the things that hinder us in prayer. Many would probably spend a much longer time in communion with our Lord than they do if they could bring themselves to believe that standing, walking, sitting, and even lying down may be attitudes of prayer. All are brought under the Apostle's injunction that we should pray without ceasing. It is much to be wished that the same variety of posture should be employed in private as in public, that so we may not only learn to make the half-hour or hour spent with Him as restful as possible, but to associate every attitude that we adopt with Him.

¶ 'Gairdner's life was steeped in prayer,' writes an Oxford friend. 'He had a way of praying as he walked along the street. It was a revelation to me to meet a robust mystic of that kind, a fellow as gay of spirit and as buoyant and springy as all that, and yet with a life hid with Christ in God.' 'I remember,' says Dr Donald Fraser, 'when we went out for walks together at Glasgow he would suddenly break off into prayer in the middle of Sauchiehall Street (in the heart of the city), praying as he walked along, with his eyes open, just as naturally as if he were still talking to me.'[1]

Spiritual Growth

Col. i. 9, 10.—'For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God' (R.V.).

1. The Scriptural conception of the saintly character and career is that of an ever-increasing strength and joyfulness. So far this is in agreement with the general law. It was said of William Pitt, 'He never grew; he was cast'; yet, as a rule, the normal person grows mentally in power and resource. Occasionally a youthful saint may astonish us by his completeness of character and exceptional ripeness of experience; but the law of the spiritual life is that we go from strength to strength.

¶ Professor Rufus Jones, in his book, *Finding the Trail of Life*, re-lives his boyhood in order to 'interpret the religion of a boy and to show the boy in his struggle to get through the jungle and to find the trail of life. . . . My outside life was just like that of any healthy, growing boy. But looked at from within it was mostly

[1] C. E. Padwick, *Temple Gairdner of Cairo*, 54.

an invisible battle. More real than the snow fort which we stormed amid a flight of snowballs until we dislodged the possessors of it, was this unseen stronghold of an enemy, who was dislodged only to come back into his fort stronger than ever, so that my assaults seemed fruitless and vain. When he was a boy on the frontier, going through a similar struggle, Abraham Lincoln wrote on his home-made arithmetic these verses:

> Abraham Lincoln,
> His book and pen:
> He will be good,
> But God knows when.

I know precisely how he felt. . . . I now began to be haunted by the idea that I could never really like myself, that is, be satisfied, until I was every bit good, while all the time this attainment seemed an almost hopeless quest. The result was that I had, in this period, moments of wonderful happiness when I thought of the future life, and imagined myself an inhabitant of the heavenly city, followed by other times of depression, when I saw myself as I really was—far from heavenly in nature, and as unangelic as boys usually are. I kept up a vague hope, which I sometimes put into a prayer, that by some miraculous event I might be made good, and so have the struggle done with—that, in a word, I might anticipate heaven, and find out here what it was like to be every whit good and do now the kind of things I should do when I got to be truly an angel. I think that my Uncle Eli more than anybody else helped me to realize—not by what he said, but by what he did—that this goodness of character which I was after is not something miraculous that drops into a soul out of the skies, but is rather something which is formed within as one faithfully does his set tasks, and goes to work with an enthusiastic passion to help make other people good.'

Many sincere Christians, while conscious of much in their life that is genuinely good, are distressed to find it so faint; they are almost as deeply abased by the sight of their virtues as pained by the evidence of their faults. Victor Hugo says of our Queen Anne, 'No quality of hers attained to virtue, none to vice.' Whatever we may say of ourselves concerning the latter, we have reason enough to lament the faintness of the former. We often need to pray:

> Forgive our faults, forgive our virtues, too,
> Those lesser faults, half-converts to the right.

But this need not always be. It is delightfully possible that the graces of to-day so sadly lacking in the glow and glory of life may become full of the bloom and sweetness of perfection.

Philosophers with little sympathy for Christian doctrine generally have yet believed in the perfectibility of human nature; although their idea of perfection is not that of our Lord and His Apostles. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' 'Walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing.' It was not of such a perfection that they dreamed. The pessimistic philosophers degraded man to prevent him from imagining that he could have any relation to God, and to discourage him from entertaining a high moral ambition; while the most enthusiastic optimists never proposed for emulation a moral ideal much beyond the level of the best existing manhood. But the New Testament boldly relates us to God, and demands that we mirror His perfection; it also relates us to the Son of Man, in whom the Divine ideal of manhood is realized, and requires that we 'walk worthily' of His sublime character and ministry. An ever-increasing intensity and fruitfulness of Christian life is possible, and it is our duty to strive unceasingly for the fullness of the blessing.

¶ How immense the distance between the algæ, the seaweed, the lowest form of plant life, and the Victoria Regia of the Amazon, whose leaves may be sixty feet across, and whose flower be measured by the yard! And how immense the distance between the spiritual status of one Christian and another, or between the experience of the same Christian at different times! Semper tells of two varieties of butterfly, long regarded by entomologists as distinct species, but which are in fact only the summer and winter forms of the same species. So sharply are some Christians contrasted that it is difficult to believe that they belong to the same spiritual order; yet they do, only the one appears in strength and glory, the other

in apathy and unloveliness. So widely contrasted is the experience of the individual believer at different times that he can hardly regard himself throughout as in the one state of grace; yet he is, the distinction being between his summer's fullness of life and the stagnation of a winter's eclipse.

2. The origin of the Christian character is a new heart and a new spirit, and all development begins with that inward renewal, a renewal in the spirit of the mind. The culture of character may be attempted on other lines, prompted by different motives, dominated by independent models; but such culture is not Christian. Revelation teaches that character is based on a spiritual principle, a principle of life, and its growth in power and beauty implies a fuller expression of that life. It is therefore vain to seek the ennoblement of the outer life unless we are careful vigorously to maintain the interior life. 'I am the true vine. . . . Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' Christ is absolutely essential to the realization of all the high, far-off excellence of which we have an intuition and to which we sincerely aspire. In His presence we must dwell, His beauty contemplate, His merit trust, His love share, and in His steps we must follow. As the vine is *everything* to the branch, so fellowship with Christ is *everything* to the aspiring soul.

Thou art the Vine,
And I, O Jesus, am a branch of Thine;
And day by day from Thee
New life flows unto me.
Nought have I of my own,
But all my strength is drawn from Thee alone.

As, severed from the tree, the branch must die,
So even I
Could never live this life of mine
Apart from Thee, O living Vine;
But Thou dost dwell in me,
And I in Thee!
Yea, Thine own life through me doth flow,
And in Thyself I live and grow.[1]

We may borrow an illustration from another sphere to help us to understand this intimacy and oneness with our Lord. John Gibson, the famous sculptor, writes thus in his diary: 'I renewed my visits to the Vatican. It is not to criticize that I go there, but to seek instruction in my art, which the Greeks carried to perfection. Those few masterpieces which have come down to us, though I have dwelled upon them thousands of times, still at every new visit are contemplated by me with fresh wonder and admiration, such is the influence which anything perfect, both in design and execution, has upon the mind. Those grand works of the Greeks are ever new, and always produce fresh enchantment, however often they may be surveyed.' Thus must we linger over the pages of the New Testament, contemplating closely and lovingly the living, speaking, active Jesus, while He grows upon us, more and more filling our imagination, mind, and heart. We can grow in strength and grace and blessedness only while this is our habit.

(1) We must grow in the *knowledge* of Christ. 'To walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' To increase in the knowledge of Christ is to increase in the knowledge of God; He is the only true, saving, vivifying source of such knowledge. How prone we are to think that we *already* know Christ, when indeed we only know something about Him! There are many degrees of knowledge, and we have not fully learned Christ until we know Him and the power of His resurrection. The tourist who, guide-book in hand, hurries through the Vatican galleries, may flatter himself that he knows the immortal masterpieces, and for the rest of his life talk as if he did, but he does not know them as Gibson did, who had 'dwelt upon them' intently and sympathetically 'thousands of times.' Really, only Gibson knew them at all. So, if we are to attain to the knowledge of Christ, a thousand times must He engage our thought and affection, and each time it will be with fresh wonder and admiration.

¶ The trouble is that many will not look straight at Jesus Christ. They turn their heads away. Stopford Brooke very rightly points out that Burns, like so many other literary men, deliberately refused to look face to face at the Son of God. The active scepticism of our day has largely gone with a profound ignorance of the life and teaching of Jesus

[1] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Songs*, 32.

Christ. We have been told that a company of working men, aliens from the Church, and in the majority of cases from faith, broke out into rapturous cheers after hearing a vivid presentation of the Christ who wrought out in human life the creed of creeds. What is needed is that we should find out, for ourselves, in patient study, the Christ of the Gospels, not the Christ of the Institutes, or the Christ of the *Imitation*, or the Christ of modern biographies. It should be understood that the utmost wealth of rhetoric employed even by believers to describe Christ serves only but to blanch the glowing colour of the original story.[1]

(2) We must grow in the *faith* of Christ. Accepting Him as 'the way, the truth, and the life,' it is essential that we confide increasingly in Him as such. Then in the midst of trouble and mystery our souls will experience a deeper calm, being content to ask Him fewer anxious questions. But having confessed our sin with the sighings of a contrite heart, let us once for all, and with growing conviction, trust in His grace, expect His utmost salvation; and as He has given us solemn assurances for the great future, we may with unshaken faith boldly face death and the grave, resting upon His word and promise.

¶ A day or two before his end, Dr John Duncan said to one of his friends, 'I have been at the point of death, the point of death'; and then, raising himself, he added, 'But I found that the one great mysterious death of Calvary was all that I needed at the point of death.'

(3) We must grow in the *love* of Christ. How continually the Apostles dwell upon this! To realize in our Saviour more vividly the goodwill of God to His creatures, His unfailing kindness and faithfulness, His eternal mercy and grace, until our heart glows responsively, this is to grow in the holiest passion of Divine love; and herein is plenty of room to grow. Shakespeare affirms:

> There lives within the very flame of love
> A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it.

Yet most of us know even human affection in which this happily is not true; and as we apprehend more clearly the love and beauty of God in the face of Jesus Christ we become conscious of an adoring affection that no kind of wick or snuff can abate, and in this white inextinguishable flame our soul and its felicity are perfected.

¶ 'The real secret of Henry Drummond's charm,' says Sir William Robertson Nicoll, 'lay in his passionate devotion to Jesus Christ.' He really loved his Lord; loved Him naturally, intensely, increasingly. He lavished upon his Saviour a vast wealth of deep, strong, masculine tenderness. A woman who was applying for her Communion token at Dundee explained the work of grace in her soul by saying that she once heard Mr M'Cheyne exclaim in prayer, '*O Lord, Thou knowest that we love Thee!*' and she could see by his shining face that he meant it. Henry Drummond affected men very similarly. He made them feel that, unless they cherished a real love for Christ, and had entered into the intimate friendship of the Son of God, they were missing life's best.[1]

3. That the Kingdom of God be fully set up in our heart and life must be our commanding thought, our supreme purpose, our constant endeavour. The neglect of the spirituality of life whilst busy with many things means the decay of character, with all the sad experiences which that decay implies. In every department of life the co-operation of man secures the increase of God, and this is equally true of the growth and glory of the soul. A controversy amongst theologians, once acute, is still revived from time to time. It turns upon the question as to whether sanctification is gradual or instantaneous, whether it is attained by one definite act or by a more or less prolonged striving: some holding that in a favoured hour, by an act of consecration and faith, the believer scales the heights of purity and joy; whilst others contend for the ascent by degrees through the sanctification of the discipline of life. May not both theories be true? Not so long ago it was the dogmatic assertion of the evolutionist that a new species of plant was the result of a long series of minute and imperceptible modifications, and that anything of the nature of a leap was unthinkable; but now, sudden, inexplicable variations in plant life are generally recognized, and it seems likely that the science of the future will find a place for both explanations. Why may not the evolution of character

[1] Sir W. Robertson Nicoll.

[1] F. W. Boreham, *A Temple of Topaz*, 99.

comprehend the two rival methods of sanctification—the act of faith and the habit of faith, the discipline of many days and experiences and the sudden vision and uplifting that puts all life on a higher plane and brings into it a purity, power, and joyousness that it never knew before?

¶ Frances Ridley Havergal said of consecration, 'Full consecration may in one sense be the act of a moment, and in another the work of a lifetime. It must be complete to be real, and yet, if real, it is always incomplete; a point of rest, and yet a perpetual progression. Suppose you make over a piece of ground to another person. From the moment of giving the title-deed, it is no longer your possession; it is entirely his. But his practical occupation of it may not appear all at once. There may be waste land which he will take into cultivation only by degrees. Just so is it with our lives.'

From Law to Love

Col. i. 13.—'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.'

These words are the declaration of a great evangelical principle, the principle which specially distinguishes Christianity from all other prominent historic forms of faith, and gives it its chiefest claim to supersede them. The Apostle contrasts the power of darkness and the kingdom of the Son of His love. He says God has translated us from the one to the other. To the Apostle's thought there are two spiritual kingdoms, in one or other of which all men are living. The one which he designates darkness is not only that of evil, it is also that of ignorance and of subjection to the law of measure for measure in regard to the soul's moral liabilities. The higher kingdom is that of Divine love and of the liberty it confers. Paul tells us that, although we are helpless to win our own way from the bondage of the kingdom of darkness to what he calls the inheritance of the saints in light, God will make the required transfer in response to our faith in Christ. In other words, the believer in Christ is Divinely translated from the sphere in which only the moral law operates—in other words, the law of cause and effect in matters of conduct and moral desert to that of grace.

1. The power of darkness is an expression which may be variously construed. Any man is in the power of darkness who is in the grip of evil habits and cannot break away. In this sense the whole human race is to some extent in the power of darkness. Any person who is living in sin is in the power of darkness, but there are cases in which the dreadfulness of its dominion is more grievously felt than in others. Some horrid temptation of the flesh, for instance, may render its victim utterly prostrate periodically. The same man will be two different beings under different conditions. We shall see him calm, strong, self-reliant in the discharge of a public task in the presence of associates who call forth the best in him. But if we could see him when his dark hour comes we would be startled and shocked at the contrast. Now he is a weak nerveless being, strangely depraved and sinister. When he comes out of that hateful fit of self-indulgence it is perhaps only to plunge into a sea of remorse and despair. Such alternations cannot last for ever; either the worse or the better part must ultimately prevail. No man can go on giving in to the assaults of morbid and deadly desires without sapping the foundations of character, destroying his moral reserves.

¶ In his book, *Polar Travel*, Admiral Peary makes a very striking statement on the greatest trial in Arctic exploration. He says that whereas to nine out of ten people the word 'polar' is synonymous with cold, to one who has spent a year within the Arctic or Antarctic it is more likely to be synonymous with darkness. 'A man of the most sanguine temperament cannot avoid entirely the effects of months of polar night, and there are those of a nervous temperament whom a night in the Arctic would drive insane.'

2. When St Paul speaks of the power of darkness he includes within that category all that belongs to the plane of law as distinguished from grace; it is darkness because ignorance. Let us try to illustrate this. It is said that one of the greatest problems of the United States is that of assimilating to its citizenship persons born and brought up in countries where political liberty is not understood and does not exist. It usually takes a very long time to get such immigrants to realize the privileges and responsibilities of their naturalization as

free citizens of a free State. The fact cannot be drilled into them that they are no longer subject to some despotic authority outside themselves. Now let us try to put ourselves in the place of a man, a native of some Slavonic country, in which he and his ancestors have all been serfs bound to the soil, and let us picture that man getting away somehow to America. First look at him in his own country. There may be no such country in Europe nowadays, but there used to be, and there are still some in which serfdom obtains in practice if not in theory. This man can never leave the estate on which he is born; it owns him, in a manner of speaking, rather than he it. Nothing he can do will earn him his freedom, no matter how excellent a workman he is. He can perhaps win certain advantages, but he can never get outside the system. There can be no question of his being enfranchised by any efforts of his own, however worthy. But there are plenty of penalties that he can incur. There are certain duties to his lord which he must punctually and efficiently perform, or he will be punished. There is always an account against him which he vainly struggles to discharge; and always he knows that, however well he may do, there is a limit beyond which he can never pass; he cannot be a free man. Then one day, by a sheer act of grace, a beneficent invasion of his narrow life by some one from outside who has power to offer him the opportunity of beginning again in a new world, he finds himself translated to America. What about that burden of obligations to a feudal superior under which he used to groan, and which used to monopolize practically the whole of his time and energy? It is gone—gone as completely as if it had never been. And what of all the debts that were owing from him, and which he could never pay, and all the penalties he expected to have to endure sooner or later because of his failures in this respect? Swept clean away, he has nothing to do with them any more. He has been lifted right out of the whole system and placed in another where the old relations no longer hold good. He does not carry over with him anything that binds him to the past except his own inability to comprehend at first the illimitableness of the deliverance that has come to him.

Just as the serf finds all his disabilities drop away from him in the land of his adoption, so the law of measure for measure in the things of the soul gives way to something vastly higher. We are translated from the kingdom of law to the kingdom of love, from the power of darkness to the liberty and light of the Spirit. By faith in Christ we are lifted out of one system into another; the old legalism is transcended, the old sequences of moral cause and effect, of so much sin and so much pain, are wiped out—or, rather, we ascend into another region where they no longer operate. This is the gospel, and it is a greater gospel than we realize, for never in this world shall we be able to appropriate its benefits in their fullness. But, 'thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift,' to be united to Christ by faith is to be released from all this bondage; we become partakers of the life eternal. How long it may take for us to develop the capacity for living this life fully, depends largely upon ourselves; but one thing is certain, and that is that we are no longer under law but under grace.

¶ Perthes writes to Jacobi: 'Only the man who is possessed by love can solve the riddle of our being and of our freedom. Love is the visible form of freedom. He who loves, and even he who does not love, can see if he will that love is free as nothing in the world besides. I am in bondage if I do not love, and I cannot love if I am in bondage; and he who loves knows, as none else does know, that individual freedom and the will of God are one and the same thing.'

Many people confuse the spiritual life with the moral life, but the two are not identical by any means. The assumption so often made that holiness and moral excellence are the same thing is a mistake. Nothing of course can be spiritually good which is morally bad. But notwithstanding this the spiritual life and the moral life are different in quality. The moral life is necessarily to some extent a convention, a means of regulating our behaviour to one another here on earth, and it has to change more or less with changing conditions and lapse of time; there is nothing permanent and complete about it. Further, it always implies a certain consciousness of conflict. There is no moral life until one becomes capable of appreciating a moral law and making some effort to obey it, and we stand approved or condemned accordingly. Now, do we never feel that we

want a different kind of life from that? To be sure we do. Our own law condemns us, makes us aware of sin as otherwise we should not be, and then shuts us up within itself in a vicious circle of demands and non-fulfilments. But there is a life, the life from which Christ came to our rescue, which is complete in itself and is not subject to the limitations of the moral life, and this which is assured to us through union with our Lord and Saviour. It is the life of boundless good, of absolute fullness of all towards which the heart can aspire, of infinite love and fathomless joy.

The Missionary Imperative

Col. i. 15, 19, 20.—'Who is the image of the invisible God. . . . For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.'

1. It is probably known to many that the famous words of Matthew xxviii. 19—'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'—are now regarded by scholars as a late addition to the Gospel of Matthew. Principal A. J. Grieve, in his article in Peake's *Commentary*, describes the passage as 'a late doctrinal expansion.' A little thought makes it clear to any unprejudiced mind how sure this is. Here, to begin with, is an advanced, fully developed, and final 'Trinitarian' formula—quite foreign to any of the Synoptic teaching of Christ Himself, and belonging to a period much later than that of the gospel itself. When we turn to Acts, we find that in these early days Baptism was almost invariably into the name of Jesus. The Trinitarian formula of Baptism is a much later development. But there is another and still stronger consideration bearing upon the lateness of the text. How is it possible to equate such a direct and categorical command of Christ Himself with the attitude of the Early Church at Jerusalem in regard to the Missionary call of the gospel? St Paul's vehement argument in Galatians, and his confronting and confounding of St Peter, were on this very point of the sending of the gospel, and the conditions on which it should be sent, to the Gentiles. They were only willing at first to send a Messianic Christ, a reformed and glorified Judaism, to the world. Whereas to Paul had come the dazzling and epoch-making vision of a conception of Christ which lifted Him clean out of the net of racial entanglements and gave Him a supreme world-significance. Such a position in the Early Church, as reflected by its indisputable history, is entirely incredible if the command of Matthew xviii. 19 was known at this time as an authentic, imperative, and unarguable command of Christ.

As a matter of fact, it grows clear that neither then nor at any time did the Missionary Commission found upon this, or upon any other isolated text. The great, true, impregnable basis of Christian Missions had already been soundly laid, long before this verse was written. And that basis constitutes the chief, the immeasurable, contribution of Paul to Christianity. It was that which saved Christianity and transformed it from a glorified edition of racial Judaism into a world-religion in the first century. It is only that that can save it to-day, or any day. The true argument for Christian Missions stands almost entirely on our estimate of Christ. Here, St Paul cut himself entirely free from the entail of Judaism. Here in Colossians there is nothing even about the 'Messiah.' Very early the word appears to have faded out of Paul's Christology. His Christ is lifted clean out of the narrow, if splendid, racial category into a Cosmic significance—something beyond even the world, and that links both heaven and earth. And it is profoundly notable and significant that in this great first chapter of Colossians he links his bold and confident words about the preaching of the gospel 'in all the world' most clearly and definitely with the sublime and tremendous picture he has drawn of the real significance of Jesus Christ. That is where he put the Missionary question: and that is where it stands: and only there is it safe. If Christ is what Paul claimed for Him, there is no argument about Foreign Missions. There are no 'Foreign' Missions. The world is one: and there is only one Mission. The only meaning Christ has at all is a world-meaning.

If Paul is wrong about Christ, Missions will go; no texts will save them. But if Paul is wrong about Christ and Missions, he is wrong about Christ and us. It all hangs together. If Paul's Christ stands against the assaults of criticism and unbelief—the same yesterday,

to-day, and for ever—then Christ, the home-Church, and the world-Church stand together in glorious, inseparable, mutual implication. If Christ stands—Paul's Christ, 'the image of the invisible God . . . in whom all fulness dwells' —then the whole scheme hangs together. One is impossible apart from the other. If Christ goes, faith perishes, for if the best religion can't stand, no religion will survive.

But if Christ stands, we have to accept the whole scheme as Paul saw it, with instinctive and unanswerable logic. Christ has a world-implication, no less, no other. We can't be true to Christ without accepting and being true, so far as we can—in heart and ideal, anyway—to His whole significance. We can't be healthy here at home if we don't accept all the conditions of health and all the essential factors of success of the whole gospel. If you have a paralysed leg, the effective movements of your arms, too, will be seriously crippled. So the world-view is vital to the health and well-being of the whole Church.

¶ An artist was asked to paint a dying Church. Did he set upon the canvas a small and feeble congregation in a ruined building? Quite the reverse. He depicted a stately edifice with rich pulpit, organ, and windows. But in the porch there was hung a small box, with the words above it: 'Collection for Foreign Missions'; and just over where the contributions should have gone, the slit was blocked by a cobweb! The missionary spirit is the very essence of the Church's life. The words which Whittier whispered just before he died enshrine the supreme duty of all true followers of Christ: 'Give my love to the world.'[1]

What we are committed to here is the acceptance of a Christ 'who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. . . . For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell . . . by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.' 'All things in earth'—leaving heaven out of the question for the moment. 'Continue,' he proceeds, 'in the faith—this faith—grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which was preached to every creature under heaven.' An echo of Matthew xxviii. 19? Not at all. Matthew xxviii. 19 was based on that—the Church's acceptance of that—the inevitable and indisputable implication of the sublime Christology of this Colossian Epistle.

2. Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation. It is the revelation, supreme and final, of the love and purpose of God towards all the world, in Christ. There is not a single claim of joy, conviction, illumination, comfort, salvation, that we make concerning the gospel that does not belong to the world, on precisely the same ground that it belongs to us. When we hear people say that Christianity is only adapted to the more advanced and civilized peoples—that native races are better with their own religions—it is well to remember that that is exactly what the Jews said, and what even the Jerusalem Church was in danger of saying, about early Christianity—the very thing that Christ anointed Paul to rescue Christianity from.

¶ When some one suggested that Muhammadanism was a good enough religion for Africa, Dr Aggrey answered with real passion —'Good enough? Only the best is good enough for Africa.'

It was precisely because Paul had that great vision of Christ, and the courage that vision gave him, to break down this 'racial superiority' idea of religion, this idea of a select religion for a select people—it was precisely and solely that that gave us Christianity at all. And any and every attempt to weaken or frustrate the Missionary appeal of Christianity is an unconscious—and, could it be successful, a fatal—attempt to drag it down and back: to rob it of its sublimest function: and above all, it is to fail to see the significance and implication of the very Incarnation of Christ Himself, and of the world-meaning of God in Christ.

'There's no sense in going further—it's the edge
of cultivation,'
So they said, and I believed it—broke my
land and sowed my crop—
Built my barns and strung my fences in the little
border station,
Tucked away below the foothills where the
trails run out and stop.

Till a voice, as bad as conscience, rang interminable changes,
On one everlasting whisper, day and night
repeated—so:

[1] N. M. Caie.

'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you: Go!'[1]

Assuming this conception and interpretation of Christ, we see how foolish and futile it is to attack the Missionary question, or to regard the Missionary problem as if it were merely an affair of outposts. It is an affair of the central citadel—of the water and food supply. It is simply and solely a matter of the meaning of Christ and the worth of Christ. It is not merely, or even perhaps chiefly, a question of whether the world needs Christ, but of whether Christ needs the world, to be really Christ. For once we begin with Paul, and a Christ 'who is the image of the invisible God, above all thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,' then by an inevitable process of spiritual logic we are pressed forward to Paul's conclusion—'by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven': and 'the hope of the gospel which is preached to every creature under heaven.' If Christ is what Paul saw, believed, and declared Him to be, then this only half-developed, baffled, thwarted, but ever-aspiring world of ours, with its half-lights and its loose ends, must be gathered up into a unity somewhere. And the Missionary problem, far from being a small matter of pros and cons—'of nicely calculated less or more'—is seen to be deeply rooted in, and bound up with, the whole Christian philosophy of the world and of the universe.

Christ in Christian Experience

Col. i. 16.—'For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him' (R.V.).

THIS is an amazing utterance, when we remember the date at which it was made. Thirty years before, Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified. Now we have St Paul identifying Him with the source and fount of all things, and saying that in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, and that the universe is sustained by His power. In the Epistle to the Ephesians St Paul says that it is the Divine purpose to sum up all things in Christ. Christ is the goal toward which all things are moving. So the Apostle gives Jesus Christ the highest place in the scheme of reality. It is a charge not infrequently brought against St Paul that he is the creator of Christianity, that he invented its theology, that he was a mystic who dreamed dreams of a spiritual Christ with whom he was united, and then gave those dreams a theological framework by identifying Christ with God and making Him the creative principle of the universe. And it is this charge that we are briefly to examine.

1. Two things require to be said at the outset. First, we are not concerned to defend all the language that St Paul uses or the precise form of thought which he employs in his description of Christ. Thought-forms change from age to age. The Apostle had to work with the ideas current in his day, and some of his ways of putting deep theological truths may not appeal to us in the twentieth century with our different mental outlook. Theology is only the attempt to give intellectual shape to Christian experience and certain facts of history connected with Christianity. And each age must form its own theology. That does not mean that we are to throw over our historic creeds or our traditional theological doctrines, but only that we should not be afraid, if occasion arises, of reinterpreting them or possibly restating them if we can find a better way of doing so. The important thing is St Paul's estimate of Christ, not the precise language in which he expresses it.

The second preliminary thing is this: that those who criticize St Paul for illegitimately deifying Jesus—for that is what the charge comes to—must ask themselves the question why it should ever have entered the head of the Apostle to do so. He must have seen something very remarkable in Jesus to make him want to speak of Him as he does. Nor is he alone in his estimate of the crucified Galilean. The Fourth Gospel uses language just as high about Him when it describes Him as the Word which from all eternity was with God. We have also to take into account the Epistle to the Hebrews—very different from the Fourth Gospel or St Paul's Epistles, and yet exalting

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *The Explorer*.

Christ in much the same manner. And there are other writings in the New Testament which teach the same kind of exalted Christology. In a word we have to deal with a *general estimate* of Christ, and not simply with the estimate of one man.

2. It took a little time for the Early Church to think out who Jesus Christ was; and there is surely nothing strange about that. Are his contemporaries always able to give a statesman or a poet his proper place in history or in literature? We can trace clearly in the New Testament stages in the growth of the disciples' appreciation of Jesus. Always there was that about Him which puzzled them and woke their wonder. But at first, while He was with them, in the early stages of His ministry, He was to them a prophet or a teacher with a Divine mission. As the ministry was drawing to an end, Jesus revealed Himself to them as the Messiah. The Jews were expecting a political Messiah who was going to free their nation from Roman domination. But our Lord said He was a Messiah who must suffer and be crucified. In accepting Jesus as the Messiah, the disciples had advanced a stage in their estimate of His Person. Then came the Crucifixion and the falling to the ground of all their hopes. But, after a brief interval, the scene is entirely changed. The despairers are filled with joy and courage and go out to preach the gospel of the Risen Christ. Whatever difficulties there may be about the story of the Resurrection or the mode of it, the fact that Christ rose is the basis on which the Christian Church is built. It was the Resurrection that helped more than anything else to give the disciples a higher estimate of Christ.

But even with their certainty about the Resurrection, it was still as the Messiah that they thought of Him. In those early days they had not reached St Paul's thought of Him. This is, for example, how He is described in St Peter's sermon in Acts ii.: 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you.' That has not got the ring of the triumphant assertion of the Apostle in our text. We can trace a development in St Paul's conception of Jesus, though after his conversion his thought of Christ was always very high. Thus in his earliest Epistle, First Thessalonians, he brackets Christ with God, writing to 'the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he uses the familiar devotional formula: 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,' which shows clearly that Jesus had for him the value of God. At the end of his life, when he was in prison in Rome, he writes to the Colossians and gives to Jesus the highest possible place, attributing to Him a Cosmic or world-significance, identifying Him with the creative principle of the universe, and speaking of Him as 'the image of the invisible God.'

3. The question which we have to consider is, why the Apostle reached this lofty conception about Jesus. The fact that He rose from the dead cannot entirely account for it, though it is easy to see what an immense difference in their estimate of His Person must have been caused by their assurance that He had really triumphed over the last enemy. Surely what accounts for it all is Christian experience, experience of Christ's power, the realization that, though physically absent, He was spiritually present. The writer of the Fourth Gospel describes his purpose in writing in this way: 'Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye may have life in his name.' It has a double purpose, doctrinal and practical. He wants to show that Jesus is to be interpreted in terms of Godhead, and he wants his readers to realize that Jesus is a life-giver and can make a difference to them in their daily life.

Theology is based on experience. Now, we have got abundant evidence in the Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles that to those early Christians came a marvellous spiritual experience. We read in Acts of the great joy which filled those early believers. We read of the spirit of unity and fellowship which possessed them. They knew themselves to be one body animated by a common hope. A great enthusiasm seized them, and they went out boldly to preach the Good News. And all their experience centres round Jesus Christ. They became

aware that He was still present with them and that from Him streamed out life-giving and regenerating forces which transformed them. Jesus Christ was then and there making a real difference in their lives. And it is the same in St Paul's Epistles. The message which he preaches is the message of a Christ who is alive, and, through His Spirit working in men's hearts, can change them. The Apostle himself underwent a revolutionary spiritual change, and the dominating certainty of his life is that Jesus Christ is moulding and shaping him and giving him power to do and to endure. He writes his Epistles in order that his converts may share his own experience. His Christology, his doctrine of Christ, is simply the attempt to render intellectually what he had experienced practically in the depth of his own soul. He grew in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. As his experience deepened, so did his estimate of Christ expand, until at last he opens this letter to the Colossians from his prison and says that Christ is the creative power or principle of Godhead.

¶ After all, is there any satisfying explanation, worthy of Paul, worthy of his moral dignity and the height of his inspiration, apart from this, that he believed what he did because, face to face with Jesus Christ, he could do no other? Are we not at length led to see that that Life of Christ which was being lived in Paul's broken and renewed heart was a life to which there was for him no ultimate conclusive explanation in Nazareth or Bethlehem or anywhere else soever, save in the eternities with God Himself? Jesus Christ, as Paul had come to know Him, had about Him the rumour and mystery of the Godhead; and the Holy Ghost testified within Paul that this was so.[1]

¶ It is a scientific principle that the true nature of a cause becomes apparent only in its effects, and so the Divinity, or more accurately the Deity, of Jesus is truly realized only through the experience of His saving working in surrendered lives. As the Reformers put it, 'to know Jesus truly is to know Him in His benefits.' It was their experience of these benefits, of the moral and spiritual influence of Jesus in their lives, their finding that in Him the living God met them and touched them and made them new creatures—it was this, rather than any particular sayings or assertions of Jesus, that led the Apostles themselves, Jews though they were, with this as the fundamental article of their creed, 'the Lord our God is one,' to take Jesus out of the series of mere men and place Him within the Godhead and say, 'God was in Christ.' And these 'benefits' or saving effects are borne ever-increasing witness to down the ages in the lives of those who commit themselves unto Him, so that Jesus proves Himself to be no mere fact of past history but a super-historical figure, the living contemporary and Saviour of men in every age.[1]

We cannot really begin to answer the question, Who is Christ? until we have taken into consideration *the work* of Christ, what He has done and is doing by way of redeeming men. Christianity is not just simply a system of theological doctrine or a code of ethical principles. It is a life, and a life sustained by Another, a life which finds its springs in Jesus, risen, ascended, and present now as spiritual power. St Paul found it to be that; and the only reasonable explanation he could give of the fact was to put Jesus Christ into the Godhead and see in Him the creative and redeeming life of God at work in the world. And he gazes out into the distant future and dreams of the day when God's purpose in Jesus Christ shall have received complete fulfilment and all things shall be summed up in Him, when God's purpose of good shall be accomplished and a sin-saddened humanity shall have become a humanity redeemed by Christ.

4. Now, did St Paul estimate Jesus too highly, and do our creeds estimate Him too highly? Surely not, if we take account of the whole range of Christian experience, which is simply a commentary on the power of Jesus Christ. There is indeed inspiration in the memory of the great and good men of the past. But we cannot explain Christian experience by saying that it is the result of a cherished memory. Jesus, the hope for the future, the hope of a world torn by sin and strife and in its best moments longing for a better state of things—let us store that hope as a very precious thing. But that hope will not account for Christian experience. Sinners are not made saints by hope. Jesus as a present source of life and power, the maker of character, the friend here

[1] G. O. Griffith, *St Paul's Life of Christ*, 63.

[1] J. M. Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, 92.

and now of the sad and heavy-laden, the pardoner and encourager, the fount of creative spiritual energy—there we are on better ground. Memory, hope, power—Jesus is all three. But He is remembered so vividly because He is power; and He is the hope of humanity because of what He has already done. Take away the power and the hope will vanish and the memory slowly fade as His figure moves further and further away into the receding past.

And if our theology is to be living, if it is not to be just a matter of acceptance by the head of certain traditional beliefs about Jesus Christ, we must try to enter into the experience of Christ's power and presence which came to St Paul and to those early Christians. The only way in which we can do that is to live here and now in friendship with Him, trying to live as if He were with us, reproducing in ourselves His spirit of love and goodness and self-sacrifice. If we do that, then we shall become increasingly aware that He can go with us on the road of life. And to be a Christian means to company daily with Jesus Christ.

The night was dark, and the shadows spread
As far as the eye could see;
I stretched my hand to a human Christ,
And he walked through the dark with me.

Out of the darkness at last we came,
Our feet on the dawn-warmed sod;
And I knew by the light in his wondrous eye
That I walked with the Son of God.

Christ and the Universe

Col. i. 16, 17.—'In him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist' (R.V.).

It is not God the Father, but God the Son who is the subject of these sentences. But what vast claims the Apostle makes for Him! Speaking of the relation of Christ to this universe of ours, he says three tremendous things about Him. He says that Christ created it, 'In him were all things created'; that He sustains it, 'In him all things consist'; that He is to possess it, 'All things have been created . . . unto him'—it is to become wholly and entirely His. The universe begins, continues, and ends in Christ. He was in its past; He is in its present; He is to fill its future.

1. The first claim St Paul makes is that Christ was the instrument of creation—through His agency it came into being. 'In him were all things created.' 'In the beginning *God* created the heaven and the earth,' says the opening sentence of Genesis. Only the most pedantic literalist will find any difficulty in the fact that creation is attributed in one place to the Father and in another to the Son. Father and Son were both engaged in the work of creation, as Father and Son were both engaged in the work of redemption. The love of Father and Son found expression in creation; and that same love found expression in redemption. But the Son was with the Father in creation. 'All things were made by him,' says St John, 'and without him was not anything made that hath been made.' This is a great and satisfying answer to the mind's questioning as to the origin of our universe. It is important to remember that science has nothing to say as to ultimate origins. Science deals with phenomena, with certain physical facts that come within the range of sense-perception. 'In its researches into the dim beginning of things it has got back to the atom, and back of the atom to electrons, and back of the electrons to the ether as the ultimate medium composing the material universe'; but it is still no nearer the real beginning of things. Atoms, electrons, ether—where did they come from? Professor Ray Lankester says quite definitely that 'No sane man has ever pretended, since science became a definite body of doctrine, that we know, or ever can hope to know, or conceive of the possibility of knowing, whence this mechanism has come, why it is there, whither it is going, and what there may or may not be beyond and beside it which our senses are incapable of appreciating. These things are not explained by science and never can be.' Long ago Lucretius, the Latin poet, propounded the theory that the world was the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms—anticipating the kind of account many materialistic scientists give still. But it is as impossible to believe that our world just 'happened' as it would be to believe that the letters of the alphabet came together by accident to form the

plays of Shakespeare—that Portia's great speech about mercy, and Hamlet's soliloquy about death, and John o' Gaunt's panegyric about England were the result of a 'fortuitous concourse' of letters. When we read these mighty and moving passages we know that behind them was a great mind beating out its own deep thoughts and then expressing them in words of imperishable beauty. And it is just as impossible to maintain that our world 'happened' by accident. For there is *mind* in it. Indeed men are able to understand the universe just because there is mind in it. Science is based upon the rationality of the universe. Well, where did the rationality come from? You can't attribute mind to matter, to atoms or electrons or the ether. There is one satisfying solution of the problem of the origin of this world—that it is the product of an infinite, directive Mind. Evolution does not touch the truth of creation. What evolution does is to substitute creation by process for creation by direct and immediate fiat.

¶ Here is Sir W. F. Barrett's conclusion: 'The final analysis of the physicist pushes out beyond the boundary of the seen, compelling us to believe, as we were told long ago, that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear, but is the direct, continuous offspring of an unseen universe and an indwelling yet transcendent Power.' And here is Sir J. Arthur Thomson, one of the most brilliant scientists of our day, saying the same thing, when, after tracing the cosmos back to the nebula, he proceeds: 'And if you like to add, In the beginning was the Logos, the Word, science has no word to say against it.'

2. But in the course of these verses St Paul goes on to make a second tremendous claim for Christ. He not only created the universe, but He sustains it. 'In him were all things created . . . and he is before all things and in him all things consist,' or, as the last phrase might be more accurately translated, 'in him all things cohere.' It is as if the Apostle would say that the universe would cease to be a universe, it would fall to pieces, but for the fact that Christ keeps it together. For Christ did not simply create the world and then leave it. He remains in it, directing it, ruling it, controlling it. We have reason to be thankful to the evolutionists for a new realization of this truth. For evolution teaches that creation is a process. The world is not so much *made*, as becoming. The Power that created it is still at work in it: 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'

This is true of the physical order. For it is an *order*. There is nothing haphazard or accidental about the succession of the seasons, or the ebb and flow of the tides, or the orbits of the stars. There are evidences of what the scientists call 'purposive intelligence,' which lead inevitably to the conclusion that there is a 'directive factor.' And this purposive intelligence is possessed of Infinite Energy. And it is this Infinite Energy possessed of intelligence and thought which keeps the universe together and directs its various movements. But what is this Infinite Energy which is dowered with thought but God?

¶ Lord Kelvin frankly declares, 'Science positively affirms Creative Power. It is not in dead matter that we live and move and have our being, but in the creating and directing Power which science compels us to accept as an article of belief. We cannot escape from that conclusion when we study the physics and dynamics of living and dead matter all around. . . . We only know God in His works, but we are absolutely forced by science to believe with perfect confidence in a Directive Power—in an influence other than physical, or dynamical, or electrical forces.'

And as there is evidence of thought and purpose in the material universe, so is there also evidence of a directing and overruling mind in the affairs of men. 'There's a Divinity that shapes our ends.' Evidences of purpose and direction in the affairs of men are not as obvious and unmistakable as are the evidences of plan and purpose in the material world. And that for a perfectly plain and simple reason. In Nature the will of the Creator is unchallenged. Christ's writ runs throughout the measureless reaches of space. But when it comes to the realm of *human* nature, the case is altered. For men are constantly resisting, challenging, thwarting Christ's will for them. Some people, indeed, would deny Providence altogether. They tell us it is impossible to reconcile any doctrine of sovereignty with the fact of human freedom. And it may be impossible for us to *see* how the one fits in with the other. And yet in the interests of the sanity of the world we must

believe in both. We believe in human freedom, otherwise the world would cease to be a moral world; we believe in sovereignty, otherwise the world would be a meaningless world—it would be like a ship left with its engines still running but with no one to steer it or to direct its course.

As a matter of fact, over long stretches of history we can see evidences of the guidance of an over-ruling Mind. There is what Matthew Arnold calls a 'stream of tendency.' There are eddies and whirlpools, and backwaters and twists in the stream—but the stream is there, and it is making its way towards some infinite sea.

Over the great city
Where the wind rustles through the parks and the gardens,
In the air, in the high clouds brooding,
There I am.
Think not because I do not appear at first glance,
Because the centuries have gone by and there are no assured tidings of me,
That therefore I am not there!
Think not that because all goes its own way
That therefore I do not go my own way through all!
The fixed bent of hurrying faces in the street,
Each turned toward its own light and seeing no other,
Yet I am the light toward which they all look.
The toil of so many hands to such multifarious ends,
Yet my hand knows the touch and twining of them all.
Make no mistake, do not be deluded:
Over the great city
There I am![1]

3. But perhaps the greatest claim the writer makes for Christ is this. He not only made the universe; He not only sustains it; but He is to possess it. 'All things,' says St Paul, 'have been created through him and *unto* him.' 'Unto him'—that is the purpose of creation—that all created things may become the possession of Christ. 'In the name of Jesus,' he says in another place, 'every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth.' Paul with his spiritual eye sweeps through every realm of being—heaven, earth, Hades—and everywhere he sees Jesus' rule acknowledged, no single spot where He is not obeyed. 'All things are to be subjected unto him,' he says in yet another place. 'He is to abolish all rule and all authority and power,' and then He will surrender the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and God shall be all in all.' That is the destined end of our world. It is Christ's by right already. He has a double title to it. It is His by creation. It is His also by redemption. But His ownership is disputed. His rule is repudiated. Great parts of the world have cast off their allegiance. But in the long run Christ is to prevail. It is a bracing word for such a day as ours. The Christian Church at the moment is not enjoying the exhilaration of triumph and advance. But if we are at the moment in an eddy, that is no reason for depression, much less for despair. Think of the condition of things when the words of the text were written. The Christians were a mere handful of humble, undistinguished people, with everything against them. They had to wrestle against principalities and powers. They were confronted by a bitterly hostile world. And yet they never doubted about the issue. They faced that hostile world with a high and noble courage—with a confidence born of the certainty of triumph.

Despair of the world, really and at bottom, is despair of God. And perhaps we need to be reminded, as Douglas was by that old negro woman when news of a bad defeat of the Northern Army reached him, and he burst into tears as if the cause of freedom were lost. 'Frederick Douglas,' said the brave old soul, 'God is not dead.' What the present condition of things ought to do for us is to challenge us to more faithful service, more holy living, more unashamed witnessing. God has not changed His mind and He has not abdicated His functions. Christ is to reign. He is creation's Lord, and His Kingdom shall come.[1]

Come, then, and, added to Thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was Thine
By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth;
And Thou hast made it Thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with Thy Blood.
Thy saints proclaim Thee King; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen,
Dipt in the fountain of Eternal Love.[2]

[1] D. Carpenter.

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Inevitable Christ*, 144.
[2] Cowper, *The Winter Walk at Noon*.

The Pre-eminence of Christ

Col. i. 18.—'That in all things he might have the pre-eminence.'

In a series of statements among the grandest and profoundest he ever made, St Paul sets forth three conceptions of Christ, namely, in His relation to God, to Creation, and to the Church; and in virtue of His supremacy in these relations, there follows the further vindication of His absolute pre-eminence in all things. In Nature and in grace, in the world as in the Church, in the physical sphere and in the moral, Christ's place and dignity are supreme.

1. In relation to God, Christ is the image of the invisible God, God's representative and manifestation of Himself to the world, God in human likeness made visible to men that they might know Him, and see Him, and be assured of all He felt and purposed towards them. What we know of the invisible God we know through Christ, who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.

In relation to Creation, Christ is the first-born, that is to say, not the eldest in the family of creatures as if He Himself were one of them, but first in comparison of all creatures, existing before them, and therefore the acknowledged head in all God's household, sovereign over all Creation, absolutely heir and Lord of all. To Christ also belongs the work of Creation itself. The world was made by Him and through Him. He was God's agent in Creation. More than that; it has been created in Him. In Him is centred the mainspring of all its motions and developments, in Him as the source and origin of it all; and, that the cycle may be complete, unto Him are all things and in Him now do all things cohere and consist.

In the Church He is supreme. Christ's pre-eminence is absolute; it extends not only to the natural world but also to the moral world; and so Paul adds, 'He is the head of the body, the Church.' Evidently the Apostle means to draw a parallel between the relation of Christ to Creation and His relation to the Church. He bears to the Church that same relation which He bears to the natural universe, that is to say, in Him, through Him, unto Him was the Church made, and in Him now as the bond of its unity does the Church live and move and have its being. As Christ is the source of all the life in the outer world, so in the Church, which is His body, He is the head. All life in the Church is from Christ the head, all authority for the guidance of the body is in Christ the head; in all things in the Church, Christ has the pre-eminence.

2. It is of Christ as the centre of our purely religious aspirations and hopes that we speak and think most, and rightly so; but conceive Him as Paul sets Him forth, not only as the centre and source of salvation, but as the centre and source of the universe itself, as supreme in all things and in all times, and in the development of all history. Such a conception of Christ will widen our horizon, and give to our conception of things a unity and consistence which otherwise it cannot have. All true thoughts of the world must start from these words in the first chapter of Genesis, 'In the beginning—God!' So also says Paul. Christ, he says, is the first-born of every creature, He was before all things and through Him all things have been made. Consider the development of history and mark its strange turns and deep perplexities, the things that have been inexplicable, unaccountable, beyond our comprehension. See, for example, the New Testament Church of Christ, now setting out like some fair ship with sails well filled, speeding on before a prosperous wind, and then troubled and tempest-tossed, like to sink beneath the waves of a cruel persecution, or becalmed in the Middle Ages, no breath of God's Spirit to be felt, no open vision; and again, when the Spirit-swept days of the Reformation came, starting afresh—mark these things and then interpret them in the light of the Apostle's thought, 'unto him were all things created.' These are but the developments through which at the last unity and completeness will be attained.

What a wonderful thought it is that the world was created in Christ, that He is so intimately connected with all its abounding life and variety, that the laws by which it is guided, and the purposes which govern all its affairs had their origin in Christ! How near that brings Him to us, and how full of meaning everything becomes in its light! We need not roam through the world as if it were an empty house. Christ inhabits every room in it. Did

we only realize that in the natural world He has the pre-eminence, how much less of a mystery would it be to many of us! Doubtless there is much in the natural world that seems contrary to revelation; but to many the idea of the absolute pre-eminence of Christ and the faith that in Him, through Him, and unto Him all things were created is a sufficient solution. At least, when we interpret the laws and forces of Nature in this light, while we may not have solved the mysteries we shall have found a solution which at once satisfies our religious wants and is moreover intelligible: the solution which makes this world and all its wonders and mysteries one compacted whole, whose source and origin are in Christ, by whom all things were made, through whom they are being sustained, and whose will is at the heart of all.

¶ Dr Chalmers has said that as a student of divinity at St Andrews he spent nearly a year in a sort of mental elysium. 'The one idea which ministered to my soul all its rapture was the magnificence of the Godhead, and the universal subordination of all things to the one great purpose for which He evolved and was supporting creation.' He said to a member of his family that in this period of his life 'not a single hour elapsed in which the over-poweringly impressive imagination did not stand out bright before the inward eye; and that his custom was to wander early in the morning into the country, that, amid the quiet scenes of Nature, he might luxuriate in the glorious conception.' [1]

But all are under one. One spirit—His
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
Rules universal nature.

Again, if Christ's pre-eminence were kept in view, our own life with all its ups and downs, its crosses and burdens, its perplexing trials, its apparently ill-regulated system of rewards and punishments, would have for us new meaning, deeper significance. Christ is King in the world of human affairs as well as in the world of Nature. The Christian man requires no more than this to make plain the deepest mysteries of life. If Christ has in all things the pre-eminence—Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us—if He is everywhere, if, out of every storm and solitude, we can hear His voice across the darkness saying, 'It is I,' why should we fear? Is there not here enough for all our need, enough in the simple knowledge that He is near and that we are in His hands? Such is, and such has been, the Christian testimony. Even in the darkest days, it is the Christian testimony that there is that in Christ which, apprehended in faith, will keep the balance of a man's life true.

3. The most important consideration, however, is as to the securing of the pre-eminence of Jesus in the lives of individual believers, and nothing is more heart-searching and wholesome than the personal query as to the relative position which He occupies in our lives. For Christians are mainly divisible into three classes—those who give Him place, those who give Him prominence, and those who give Him pre-eminence. The first named are those who admit Him because of the gifts He brings, without which they know themselves to be eternally impoverished. Of the unworthiness and almost of the immorality of such an attitude nothing need be said. Its mere enunciation is its condemnation. Those who give Him prominence are those who engage themselves in His service—religious people whose pleasure is to a large extent found in the spheres of worship and work, but whose lives are in reality self-controlled. Christ is merely a prominent figure among others in the realm of their existence, one to whom certain deference is paid, but who is in no sense obeyed as the Lord of all. And the divided control of such lives is itself a pre-determination of weakness and ineffectiveness. Those who give Him pre-eminence, yielding all they are and have to His rule, submitting everything to His direction, and seeking in all things only to add to His glory, are doubtless in the minority. But they are, and always have been, a minority of power and victory. For these are they whose love overflows the conventional limits of expressed affection, and counts nothing as a really adequate return for the great love wherewith He hath loved them. And such love partakes of the invincible character of that to which it responds.

For the souls who love supremely,
Let woe come or bliss,
These will count their dearest heart's blood
Not their own but His.
Saviour, Thou who thus hast loved me,
Give me love like this.

[1] J. T. Stoddart, *Great Lives Divinely Planned*, 69.

¶ Professor Drummond used to tell of an invalid girl whose life, so unruffled in its peace and fragrant with the beauty of holiness, was a constant source of wonderment to those who knew her pain and were acquainted with her circumstances. After her death the secret was discovered. A small locket which had hung about her neck was found to contain the words, 'Whom having not seen I love!'

The importance of giving to Christ His rightful place is attested by the fact of common experience that that which is pre-eminent in thought and affection exercises the strongest formative influence in the cultivation of character. This is seen when men make money, pleasure, ambition, or success the pre-eminent thing in life, and devote to it their best strength of thought and energy. Character deteriorates, powers of vision become dim, and holier impulses are killed at the birth, until that to which pre-eminence has been voluntarily given becomes the absolute master. It is a man's own safety and highest good, as well as the honour of Christ, which is determined by the place he assigns to the Son of God.

Christ will not be content to receive, nor should we be to offer Him, the first place in one thing, or in two things, or in three, but He must have it in all things—in the heart, in the home, in the Church, in the world, in every sphere and duty of life Christ must rule. Christianity is not, indeed, a code of regulations drawn up on every question of life and conduct that confronts us. It is a principle infinite in its application, applicable in all the varied departments of work and duty. A man cannot be Christian in one line and unchristian in another. Christ is one, and so is life; it is not a patchwork of mutilated acts. There is no part of our life which can be withdrawn from His control. In all things He is to have the pre-eminence, to be crowned King, to be made the standard and the goal of life.

¶ 'That in all things he might have the pre-eminence.' 'And He must have it; and He will have it; and He shall have it!' The words were uttered by the Rev. C. Simeon, in his pulpit at Cambridge, in his old age, about the year 1835. The scene was reported to me from memory in 1868 by the late Dean Howson, of Chester; he was in the church, and heard the impassioned words, and saw the form of the aged preacher actually rise in height as the soul erected the body to bear witness to the Redeemer's glory. The effect was strong and thrilling. But the words and action were after all only the *just* utterance of a faithful servant consenting from his heart to *the fact* of his Lord's glory, and of his Father's purpose for the Son of His love.[1]

The Great Reconciliation

Col. i. 19, 20.—'For it was the good pleasure of the Father . . . through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens' (R.V.).

In this passage the Apostle points to the great reconciliation as it affects, not only this material world but also the world invisible. There is a clear affirmation here, that God, through Christ, brings order out of chaos, and converts discord into harmony, both in this known realm and in the unknown. 'For it was the good pleasure of the Father . . . through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether *things upon the earth, or things in the heavens.*' It is when our minds dwell upon this wider aspect of God's deed of grace that we begin to feel something of the greatness and the adequacy of the eternal Cross.

1. Think, first, of God's act of reconciliation and the invisible realm. We overlook what is fundamental in the atonement when we confine His reconciling work to a single event on Calvary, or as applying exclusively to this world. For the truth is, that evil has its origin, and derives its impetus, in the world that we cannot see. We are frequently perplexed, no doubt, as to the source of our evil thoughts. They flash across the mind uninvited. We ask: 'Whence do they come?' St Paul thought of an outside region of good and bad ideas; a region which forces itself through to us in superlative goodness and superlative badness; a region timeless, spiritual, invisible.

He thought of it as having its own order or constitution, but in it there are forces which defy its constitution. It is in this unseen world, that lies all around our world of sense, that all our sin and sorrow are generated. They pierce the veil that hides this chaotic region from

[1] H. C. G. Moule.

our view, and, like a mighty battalion of forces. they march in upon us. The Apostle calls this spirit realm of good and bad, the heavenlies.

¶ We have this thought expressed in the familiar verse :

Principalities and powers,
Mustering their unseen array,
Wait for thy unguarded hours :
Watch and pray.

Now, it must be clear that if God's redeeming act in Christ is to be of any real benefit to us in our world of sense, it must, first of all, be applied to this world of spirit, which is underneath, around, and out of sight. Otherwise the Cross does not touch sin at its origin. It is not fundamental. It touches only a world of effect and leaves the world of cause alone.

But it seems plain, according to Paul, that the great work of reconciliation, in the eternal Christ, *does* take place in this invisible, spiritual realm. It is here that the Lamb was slain from before the foundation of the world, an act that found its best temporal expression in the Cross. The Cross is the material reflection of that spiritual act and fact which occurred, is still occurring, in that immaterial region. The Eternal God, by an eternal sacrifice, attacks and defeats sin there. If no more than this were said by Paul, the adequacy of the Cross is clearly shown in the fact that it goes down to the root of sin to destroy it there.

2. The Apostle points out the relation of the atonement to the world of sense. Whatever be the cause of it, we need no laboured proof to convince us that here, upon this beautiful earth, we have moral chaos and confusion due to sin. Evil abounds. Evil abounds in us. And we are not all prepared to seek the counteracting grace of the Cross that more freely abounds. There are times when for the sheer pleasure of it, we deliberately choose the bad. Moreover, if temptation were suddenly withdrawn to-day we still have the years that are gone to account for. In the moral constitution of every one there are the marks and blemishes of sin. If the unseen world of causes were settled, we still have the unsettled past. Above all, we need a reconciling God who can deal with our sin, *attune* our discordant nature and make it *at one* with the perfectly good. The Apostle says this can be and is being done by 'the blood of the cross.'

¶ 'I remember,' writes Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*, 'that one day, as I was musing on the wickedness and blasphemy of my heart, and considering the enmity that was in me to God, that scripture came into my mind : He hath "made peace through the blood of his cross"; by which I was made to see, both again and again, that God and my soul were friends by his blood—yea, I saw that the justice of God and my sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other through his blood. This was a good day to me ; I hope I shall never forget it.'

The phrase is distinctly Jewish. There are three clearly defined views of Christ in the New Testament. The military Roman, looking at Christ, gave an interpretation of Him which was quite consistent with his temperament, his upbringing, and his constant environment. He said : 'Christ is power, miraculous, dominating power.' The Greek, with his keen intellect, and questing mind, said : 'Christ is light, revealer of God, Divine Logos.' But the Jew, who touched the emotional side of life, whose religion came out in passion—in hymns and psalms and spiritual songs—said : 'Christ is suffering Saviour, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' Paul knew, quite intimately, the Roman, the Greek and the Jew. His own personality was the meeting centre of all three. He was a Roman citizen, born in a Greek city, a Hebrew of Hebrews. Sometimes he saw Christ as the Romans saw Him and he said : 'The Power of God.' Sometimes he looked at Christ with the eyes of the Greek and he said : 'The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Most often he thought of Christ with all his Jewish feelings welling forth, and then we get his passionate loyalty to the redeeming aspect of Christ in the words : 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross.' 'We preach Christ crucified.' It is Paul, the Hebrew of Hebrews, who utters this phrase, 'having made peace through the blood of the cross.' Now, while the Roman and the Greek viewpoints are true they are not all the truth. It is the Hebrew who brings God nearest to us. It is he who shows us the Christ revealing in His own person the suffering, sacrificial, and loving side of God. That is the God whom we need when we fall—a parental God who will spill His blood to save us. Whatever

else Paul's phrase, 'the blood of the Cross,' may mean, it brings to us the heartening truth that, disobedient though we have been, we are 'no longer under *law* but under *grace*.'

God, the God I love and worship, reigns in sorrow on the Tree,
Broken, bleeding, but unconquered, Very God of God to me.

On my knees I fall and worship that great cross that shines above,
For the Very God of Heaven is not Power, but Power of Love.[1]

3. It is this truth that gives potency and permanency to the Cross. It was this that constrained Paul to say: 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross.' He saw that it contained a life-principle which would remain when earth's proud empires had faded. Under the lure of the mighty Cross he sacrificed his social status, his amazing popularity, even his liberty. He turned away from riches, ambitions which men hasten to satisfy, dramatic splendours which captivate the senses, baser delights which enslave the mind, and he said: 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross.' Rome was the great reality. Rome, we are told, 'was ablaze with splendour, wealth and gorgeous buildings. Literature had reached its virile age. Poets blazed like stars in the intellectual firmament. Science was bewildered by its own accomplishments.' Yet Paul said: Your engineering triumphs, your bridges, your roads, your aqueducts, your works of art are as nothing. Reality is not in these. Life is not here. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross! He was right, as indeed we see after the passing of the years. The Cross is the one thing that has enduring power. It is the only thing that is left of the old world save a few museum treasures. The Cross is still the power of God unto salvation, the mighty dynamic which alone gives to the Christian Church moral force and a great moral authority over mankind.

[1] G. A. Studdert Kennedy.

The Inner and the Outer World

Col. i. 23.—'If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard.'

1. THERE are two worlds that, for each of us, seem to stand over against one another, the world outside us, as we call it, which we find ourselves observing as spectators, noting and examining, and learning, of which we ourselves seem only an accidental part, and the world inside us, which we feel as our own, which we know all about, which we in some measure create for ourselves, and from which we are inseparable.

Which of these two worlds is to be our mainstay and pivot? On occasions when the two appear to clash, which of them is it that we mean to stand by? Which of the two shall we make our starting-point for interpreting the other? One must certainly be above and the other below; but which? That is the question that men have to face.

On the one side is ranged all that sweeping weight of forces which are making for the secularization of human life. But those who believe in God and in the soul are perforce in the opposite camp. We say that, at all costs, we must start from the inner world; that is the world for the reality of which we stake our lives, and to hold to its reality is our primal necessity. And this necessity is on us, not through blind and wilful egotism, not through any instinctive caprice, but on the very strongest grounds that reason can give us. For this inner world of feeling, of will, of love, of hope, and of religion is one of which we are not merely spectators, as we are of that vast sum of things which we gaze on as it rolls past us. It is that outer world which is indeed a world of appearances outside the direct control of our critical experience; but this inner world is no mysterious, unknown, untravelled land; it is a life of which we ourselves are part and parcel. We are inside it, we are ourselves concerned with its making, we are fellow-labourers with God in its building, our will puts out its own little measure of force into the acts which occur, and, when the effect follows, to that extent at least we know the causal force by which it is brought to pass. Our impulses, our affections, our energies went out into the

work, and we must therefore know something of how it has all happened. This inner world is the one world that we, on all reasonable grounds, most certainly understand. And to tell us that we are agnostic here, that we are ignorant of what we mean by an act of will, that we are shut off by our intellectual conditions from having intelligible knowledge of our own selves —why, this is mere mid-summer madness! It is to ask us to repudiate the one thing that we do know with the highest certainty, our own existence; and it is to ask us to do it on the ground of a knowledge which confessedly starts from a world outside us, and of the sense of which we can only slowly and partially collect the meaning, a knowledge that professes itself ignorant of all the real causes by which that world exists, of all the actual motive powers by which it is worked. Such a demand stultifies itself. It asks us to surrender what we know best at the dictation of that about which we know least. We know infinitely more what we mean by 'I am,' 'I will,' 'I love,' than we ever can possibly know of what we mean by 'laws of nature'; and it is because we can be sure of our own existence, that we can also survey that other world out there.

2. Faith is that which, in the face of opposing perplexities, yet holds fast to that which it knows, and which it has for itself found to be real. The only attack that it can dread must come from within. If its inward life showed flaws and cracks then it would be serious, but so long as it is a mere conflict between what it knows to be true within and what it sees happening outside, it has but one course and but one duty—to be loyal to itself: loyal to itself, not in ignoring or denying the facts which perplexed it, but loyal in asserting its own witness to its own facts, loyal in claiming for them objective worth, solid and valid and real. This loyalty to the facts revealed by the inner knowledge as against that outer knowledge of the world itself in the cases where they collide may show itself in many points. Let us take two.

(1) First, in the possibility of *spiritual change or conversion*. Here the contrast is so sharp! There is nothing which so immediately follows on a general survey of men in the mass than the conviction that what they are now that they will remain, that there is no power that can alter their nature, character, type, and habit. We all, perhaps, know it in its most deadening form in our survey of the vast heathen world; above all, travelling among men of another faith. Looking on at them as upon interesting specimens, watching their age-long habits and immemorial religious rites, the great shadow of an immense depression falls upon the soul. It all looks so firmly rooted, so ingrained, so natural, that the very idea that this huge and ancient system of theirs could ever pass, or break, or disappear, becomes absurd. The eyes as they range about can see no sign of the inward forces from which such an upheaval could come: everything looks rooted, fixed, necessitated; as it has been so it will be. That is the largest and most obvious instance. But the same effect is continually taking place in all our surveys of the classes and the masses into which man, looked at from the outside, divides himself. In hoping for a change in them we can get as far as imagining a change of outward conditions, and with this we imagine might begin a bettering of the inward life. But then, this road of hope is always disappointing us, and we gradually learn that the outward conditions cannot be changed unless the inward life is bettered also, and then we fall back into despair. How is the inward character ever to become other than what it is, how can we expect greater moral control or higher wisdom in the lowest grades of men? Always, we say, there must be that wretched overplus of population which will sink to the bottom, do what we may, by its own moral weakness, always thriftless, indigent, idle, drunken. And so there settles down on many a soul this black cloud, a sense of the hopelessness of a change in that misery, that degradation which our cities seem to create of themselves by some horrible necessity. Now, in face of that despair, it is our first duty to hold fast by the verities of the spiritual world. From within, where the soul knows itself, it knows perfectly well the powers that can work the spiritual change. It has been a fact with us, or it could be, and we know it, and so far as it has not been it is we who have fought against, and resisted it. But the possibility is very real; clouds upon clouds, too, of living witnesses encompass us round about when we doubt it of ourselves, and all of them cry with one voice, 'We found it so, we were snatched out of an old and base life into

new clean ways of holiness and peace; we are here to bear witness that we are redeemed by the mighty power of God.' From within the soul we know this, and the demand is that we should be loyal to that undying hope for others when the outer survey of men cows us with its dreadful impotence; man can by God's inward operating be made free from all that he is; through the name of Jesus Christ he can be changed.

¶ In his novels Victor Hugo portrays some of the lowest types of humanity, and shows that they may be uplifted and ennobled. 'The multitude can be sublimated,' he declares confidently. 'These bare feet, these naked arms, these rags, these shades of ignorance, these depths of abjectness, these abysses of gloom, may be employed in the conquest of the ideal. This lowly sand which you trample beneath your feet, if you cast it into the furnace, may become resplendent crystals; and, by means of the lenses that it makes, a Galileo and a Newton shall discover stars!'

(2) And there is one great instance, the instance of *death*. The outward survey of death and its doings—can anything be more daunting and more disheartening? Death, as we look out on it, seems wholly victorious; it appears utterly to close the story of man's life. But from within, looking on death out of the eyes of this inner life, which we really know, no one could ever bring himself to believe that he would come to an end at death. In spite of all the daily, hourly news of death's doings over the whole earth, one's own death seems as inconceivable as ever. Till it actually is there knocking at the door the imagination refuses it, the whole man repudiates it; we try to lay hold of it, we say over and over again to ourselves: 'I must die, the end will come,' but no, it eludes us, it is impossible. Is not this imaginative impossibility of accepting it just the clearest evidence of what we are? Being what we are, what we know ourselves to be, it is simply silly to suppose we come to an end at death; to suppose it is to be in direct collision with our reason and our imagination, not because we desire some future happiness, but simply because the idea is so radically inconsistent with our inward character that it cannot be harmonized with it; nothing can conceivably make death look like a rational and consistent end of life. Death cannot be an end, it can only be an incident. 'Death,' said Robert Browning, just before he died, 'it is the idle, cowardly carping on death that I so dislike. For my part I deny death as the end of life. Never say of me that I am dead.' So he spoke at the close of all the long, long years, still delivering his unfaltering witness. So we, too, might speak if we would be loyal to this inward verdict, and, so speaking, we might then know how and why it was that Jesus Christ was raised the third day from the dead, might see that open door through which He passed and ascended into heaven.

The Hope of the Gospel

Col. i. 23.—'Not moved away from the hope of the gospel.'

It would surprise many of us, if we had not noticed it, to see how large a place is given to the Christian virtue of hope in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of St Paul. We 'rejoice in hope,' he says, and 'we are saved by hope.' God is 'the God of hope,' possessing it in Himself, imparting it to others. It is easily one of the first and most vital articles in his creed, and one of the sure working principles of his life. He is, indeed, one of the most conspicuous examples that can be found of invincible hopefulness. Unconquerable optimism is the note of all his teaching, and is a part of the atmosphere which he carries with him everywhere.

What is hope? It is difficult to define. *Expectancy* is in it for one thing—the outlooking of the soul as opposed to the inlooking, the looking away from yourself to some person or good. *Desire* is in it, too, not merely expectancy, for you may expect a thing and dread it. But desire is in hope. And *anticipation* is a part of it—'forefancying,' as Samuel Rutherford would say; bringing the distant and the future near; living in it before it comes; seeing things as they will be, and not as they are. There is no more sustaining or transforming influence on human life than the influence of hope. Give a man hope that his weary struggle will end in advancement, that his battle will end in victory, that the issue of the surgical operation will be a healthier, fuller life, and you have supplied him with the most valuable asset for getting through. And of all realms in which

this virtue is indispensable, the spiritual is the chief. We shall do literally no good to men unless we can go among them in a spirit of hope. The feeling to be conquered at all costs is the feeling that our work may be useless. 'I question,' said D. L. Moody, 'if the Lord can use a man who has not hope.'

¶ Every reader of *Down in Water Street* knows how striking and sensational were many of the conversions there recorded. Some of the most notorious drunkards and criminals of New York were transformed through the instrumentality of the Water Street Mission. When Jerry M'Auley was asked how he accounted for the phenomenal success of his wonderful work, he replied, 'We never abandon hope of any one!' He never gave a man up. Many a poor wretch would come, profess conversion, sign the pledge, testify in public to the change that he had experienced, and then, after a few weeks or a few months, relapse again. But at Water Street there was never a word of reproach. The prodigal was enticed back to the Mission, and was treated with unvarying affection and respect. His best self was appealed to. He was assured that he would be a good and great and upright man in spite of everything. The very feeling that he did not deserve such confidence compelled him to pull himself together. Every redeemed and reformed citizen who emerged triumphant from the doors of the Water Street Mission was a monument to the dauntless hopefulness of the workers there.[1]

1. *The Nature of Gospel Hope.*—Now come to the specific hope—'the hope of the gospel.' Let us consider its nature and constituent elements, that we may learn whether we have been moved away from it. The characteristics which we shall mention are all within the borders of this chapter.

(1) *The Redemption of the World.*—The first is the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, or, as verse twenty has it, the reconciling of all things unto God. No one can read through Paul's Epistles without observing the light of this hope shining unquenched and undimmed in his heart, that the whole wide world would be brought to God through Jesus Christ. There were no hopeless classes and no hopeless individuals to Him. He steadfastly refused to be moved away from it, or to limit or narrow it—the whole wide world reconciled and redeemed. It was a stupendous hope when one considers the dark background on which it moved, the unspeakable vileness of the pagan world in his day. And this man shut his eyes to nothing. He knew all the dark and stubborn facts of life, and he held by this vision of the conquering and reigning Christ. The vision was none of his own framing. It was the creation of the Spirit of God. This unfulfilled vision is handed down to us. It is an essential part of our inheritance. In spite of all appearances to the contrary, we must still sing with tenacious confidence—

> Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Does his successive journeys run;
> His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
> Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

It is the eternal purpose of God, and He is waiting to use every one of us to bring that purpose a step nearer to its realization.

(2) *Personal Holiness.*—The second element in 'the hope of the gospel' is the perfect goodness of all who come under the sway of Jesus. That was the passion of Paul's heart, as expressed in verse twenty-eight, 'warning every man, and teaching every man; that we may present every man perfect in Christ; whereunto I labour also, striving,' literally, 'agonizing'—the passion of his heart, not merely to get men to Christ, but to make men like Christ. And he believed they could be. He saw the transforming process going on in the lives of some people. He knew the dark land from which they had come, and he saw on them not the mark of that land but of the country to which they were travelling, and he knew that they were predestined to bear the image of Christ. And above all things he knew that this was the passion of his heart for himself.

The hope that the Christian religion will triumph over other faiths lies in its power to produce a superior type of character. It rests on what Jesus Christ can make of men. And a vital part of 'the hope of the gospel' is our being perfected unto the image of Jesus Christ. It is a perfectly Scriptural hope. It is written, 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.' The word of our Lord is 'Be ye . . . perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Christian people will accomplish next to nothing

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Three Half-Moons*, 91.

in the world apart from personal goodness. We will never *do* more than we *are*, and the passion of every Christian should be for Christ-likeness.

¶ The only successful evangelism is that of *life*: the attraction of the life, individual and social, where the moral beauty of Christ's Spirit and Christ's way may be clearly seen. No mere words about Christianity, no verbal expositions of Christian truth, however reasoned and however eloquent, carry any final potency apart from the witness of life lived out in the very Spirit of Christ. China knows this, and Africa and India; men know it instinctively everywhere; yet the Church is terribly slow in producing this kind of effective witness, both on the smaller and the larger scale. As an influential Brahmin once said to an English friend of his: 'We have had Islam in India for 1000 years, but none has ever yet said, "You ought to be like Mohammed." We have heard about Christianity in India for 100 years, and we say to Christians, "You would have more chance of succeeding if you were more like your Lord and Master, Jesus Christ."'[1]

(3) *The Hope of Heaven.*—The third element in 'the hope of the gospel' from which the Colossian Christians were not to be moved away was that of a blessed immortality for the Christian. We modern Christians have experienced a considerable weakening in this hope during the last thirty or forty years. If George Eliot came among us to-day she would not be able to sneer at the 'other-worldliness' of Christian people. She might rebuke us for our *this*-worldliness. We are greatly concerned about making heaven on earth, and that is right; but that hope will not live healthily apart from the hope of heaven hereafter. We have lost much from the Christian hope if we have allowed our horizon to end with this life. To cherish the hope of a blessed immortality will make us not the worse Christians but the better. It will make us less pagan in our conception of death. Death would be less of a calamity to us if we lifted up our eyes, as Paul does in the twelfth verse, as he constantly does, and as all the Apostles do, to the inheritance of the saints in light, to the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the spirits of just men made perfect. It is an inalienable part of the hope of the gospel, and we would be better servants of Christ and our fellow-men if it could be revived in our hearts.

Lift up thine eyes to seek the invisible:
  Stir up thy heart to choose the still unseen:
  Strain up thy hope in glad perpetual green
To scale the exceeding height where all saints dwell.
Saints, is it well with you?—Yea, it is well.—
  Where they have reaped, by faith kneel thou to glean:
  Because they stooped so low to reap, they lean
Now over golden harps unspeakable.—
But thou purblind and deafened, knowest thou
  Those glorious beauties unexperienced
  By ear or eye or by heart hitherto?—
I know Whom I have trusted: wherefore now
  All amiable, accessible tho' fenced,
  Golden Jerusalem floats full in view.[1]

2. *The Basis of Gospel Hope.*—Now, what is the ground of this hope? Because there are few things more tragic in this world than the delusions and disappointments of men of a too sanguine temperament. In a word, the basis is Jesus Christ. And who is He? Everything depends on the answer to that. Is He one of ourselves simply, with, perhaps, a little more of the Divine in Him? Was that what Paul preached, or Peter, or John? Is He, according to the Colossian heresy, the last of a long series of attenuating emanations of the Deity? Or do we see in Him, as Paul did, the unique glory of the Son of God? It is He, the complete image of God, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, who took into His heart the sin of man and suffered and died for it. It is in Him we have redemption through His blood. It is He who rose from the dead, and our hope of immortality is rooted in His empty grave. It is He who is going by the mighty power of His love to reconcile all things to God, and as for the hope of the ultimate perfection of the believer, it rests on the fact which Paul constantly proclaimed, and which he realized in himself, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' It was the opulence of Christ, the riches of His glory, and the fact that He was in immediate and living contact with man, and working on the mind and heart of man by the Spirit, that was the basis of Paul's hope. He saw all the contrary things, and he fled for refuge to lay

[1] E. S. Woods, *A Faith that Works*, 151.

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

hold on this hope. The hope of the gospel was hope in Jesus Christ, His absolutely unique personality and work, His death and resurrection, His living presence and operation in the world. In his own personal experience, he had seen and felt what Jesus Christ could do for a man, and he steadfastly believed that what Christ had done for him He could do for anybody. No failure could dim or daunt his hope, no rebuffs or disappointments could turn him away from it. And he would speak to us across the centuries to-day. He is surely one of the great cloud of witnesses which compass us about. The cause of Christ in the earth for which he wore himself out is dear to him as ever, and he would say, 'Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.'

¶ Some of us may have seen G. F. Watts' symbolic picture of Hope. It is somewhat mysterious. It is not a person with a shining and radiant face, but a woman with bowed head sitting over the world, playing upon a harp with one string. All the other strings are broken. I do not quite know what it means except this, that when everything is gone, and the harp of life is left with only one string, and most people would throw it to the scrap heap, Hope plays upon it and gets music out of it. But I take leave to interpret its message in another way. There is no other hope for humanity save 'the hope of the gospel.' The other strings of the harp are broken, and some of them are not worth mending. Many of the high-sounding expedients that men have invented for healing the world's woes and ridding it of its sin have broken down—even in my time they have not been equal to the strain put upon them. The one string left for us is 'the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.'[1]

The Sacrificial Life

Col. i. 24.—'I . . . fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.'

'I FILL up that which is behind!' Not that the ministry of reconciliation is incomplete. Not that Gethsemane and Calvary have failed. That sacrifice needs no supplement, and can receive none, but stands 'the one sacrifice for sins for ever.' 'Though we brethren die for brethren,' writes Augustine, 'yet there is no blood of any martyr that is poured out for the remission of sins. This Christ did for us.'

And yet, 'I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.' A gospel requires an evangelist. A finished case demands efficient presentation. The suggestion is this — all ministry for the Master must be possessed by the sacrificial spirit of the Master. In his own sphere, and in his own degree, St Paul must be Christ repeated. If he is to be a minister of life he must 'die daily.' Without the shedding of blood there is no regenerative toil. Every real lift implies a corresponding strain, and wherever the crooked is made straight 'virtue' must go out of the erect. The sacrificial succession is to be maintained through the ages, and we are to 'fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.'

All the afflictions
Of martyrs and confessors and the saints,
And every pure white virgin soul that faints
Under the bondage and the bitter cup,
Are benedictions
And what the Master left man to fill up;
For but by trial
Each servant of the Holy Cross, who fain
Would live the very Life and die the pain
Of that great Death and never count its price,
Must in denial
Measure the glory of His Sacrifice.[1]

Here is an Apostle, a man who regards himself as 'the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle,' and yet he dares to put his own name alongside his Master's, and humbly to associate his own pangs with the sufferings of redemptive love. Is the association permissible? Are the sufferings of Christ and His apostles complementary, and are they profoundly co-operative in the ministry of salvation? Dare we proclaim them together?

1. Take this first. 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted.' 'Who is weak and I am not weak; who is offended and I burn not?' Is the association alien and uncongenial, or is it altogether legitimate and fitting? 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted'—the deep, passionate sympathy of the Saviour; 'Who is weak and I am not weak?'—the deep, passionate

[1] Charles Brown.

[1] F. W. Orde Ward.

sympathy of the ambassador. The kinship in the succession is vital. The daily dying of the Apostle corroborates and drives home the one death of his Lord. The suffering sympathies in Rome perfected the exquisite sensitiveness in Galilee and Jerusalem.

The Apostle was a man of the most vivid and realistic sympathy. We are amazed at its intensity and scope. What a broad, exquisite surface of perceptiveness he exposed to the needs and sorrows of the race! Now it is the painful fears and alarms of a runaway slave, and now the dumb, dark agonies of people far away. The Apostle felt as vividly as he thought, and he lived through all he saw. He was being continually aroused by the sighs and cries of his fellow-men. He heard a cry from Macedonia, and the pain on the distant shore was reflected in his own life. That is the only recorded voice, but he was hearing them every day, wandering, pain-filled, fear-filled voices, calling out of the night, voices from Corinth, from Athens, from Rome also, and from distant Spain! 'Who is weak and I am not weak?' He was exhausted with other folk's exhaustion, and in the heavy burdensomeness he had fellowship with the sufferings of his Lord.

Are we, also, in the succession? Does the cry of the world's need reach the heart, and ring even through the fabric of our dreams? 'Why do you wish to return?' Dr Jowett once asked a young missionary who had been invalided home: 'Why do you wish to return?' 'Because I can't sleep for thinking of them!' We can never heal the needs we do not feel. When our sympathy loses its pang we can no longer be the servants of the passion. We no longer 'fill up' the sufferings of Christ, and not to 'fill up' is to paralyse, and to 'make the cross of Christ of none effect.'

¶ At the time of the murder of King Humbert there was brought to our minds the King's heroism during the terrible cholera epidemic at Naples in 1887. While the plague was at its worst the King was invited to the races at Pordenone, just as he was starting for Naples. His answer was 'At Pordenone they rejoice; at Naples they die; I go to Naples.'

2. Here is another association. 'He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.' So far the Master. 'I would have you know how greatly I agonize for you.' So far the Apostle. Is the association legitimate? Did not the agony at Rome 'fill up' the 'strong cryings' at Jerusalem? Does not the interceding Apostle enter into the fellowship of his Master's sufferings, and perfect that 'which is behind'? If the prayer of the disciple is to 'fill up' the intercession of the Master, it must often touch the point of agony. If we pray in cold blood we are no longer the ministers of the Cross. True intercession is a sacrifice, a perpetuation of Calvary, a 'filling up' of the sufferings of Christ.

¶ St Catherine told a friend that the anguish which she experienced, in the realization of the sufferings of Christ, was greatest at the moment when she was pleading for the salvation of others. 'Promise me that Thou wilt save them!' she cried, and stretching forth her right hand to Jesus, she again implored in agony, 'Promise me, dear Lord, that Thou wilt save them. O give me a token that Thou wilt.' Then her Lord seemed to clasp her outstretched hand in His, and to give her the promise, and she felt a piercing pain as though a nail had been driven through the palm. She had become so absolutely one with the interceding Saviour that she entered into the fellowship of His crucifixion.

Are we in the succession? Is intercession with us a travail, or is it the least exacting of all things, an exercise in which there is neither labour nor life? All vital intercession makes a draught upon a man's vitality. Real supplication leaves us tired and spent. And it is only the man whose prayer is a vital expenditure, a sacrifice, who holds fellowship with the Master, and fills up that which is behind in His sufferings.

3. Here is another association. Is it legitimate? 'Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?' 'Having stoned Paul' (at Lystra), 'they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.' And Paul 'returned again to Lystra!' Back to the stones! Is that in the succession? Is not the Apostle the complement of his Master? Is he not doing in Lystra what his Master did in Judæa? To go again and face the stones is to perpetuate the spirit of the Man who 'set his face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem,' even though it meant derision, desertion and the Cross. We never really know our Master until we kneel and toil among the driving

stones. Only as we experience the 'fellowship of his sufferings' can we know 'the power of his resurrection.'

Here is a sentence from the biography of David Hill—that rare, gentle, refined spirit, who moved like a fragrance in his little part of China. Disorder had broken out, and one of the rioters seized a huge splinter of a smashed door and gave him a terrific blow on the wrist, almost breaking his arm. And how is it all referred to? 'There is a deep joy in actually suffering physical violence for Christ's sake.' That is all! It is a strange combination of words—suffering, violence, joy! And yet we remember the evangel of the Apostle, 'If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him,' and we cannot forget that the Epistle which has much to say about tribulation and loss has most to say about rejoicing! 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth through Christ.' To these men rebuff was an invitation to return! The strength of opposition acted upon them like an inspiration. That is a magnificent turn which the Apostle gives to a passage in his second letter to the Corinthians: 'I will tarry at Ephesus . . . for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are many adversaries*'! The majestic opposition constitutes a reason to remain! 'There are many adversaries': I will hold on! That is the martyr's road, and he who treads that way lives the martyr's life, and even though he do not die the martyr's death he shall have the martyr's crown.

What is the secret of the sacrificial life? It is here. The men and the women who willingly and joyfully share the fellowship of Christ's sufferings are vividly conscious of the unspeakable reality of their own personal redemption. They never lose the remembrance of the grace that saved them. 'He loved me, and gave himself for me'; *therefore*, 'I glory in tribulation!' 'by the grace of God I am what I am'; *therefore* 'I will very gladly spend and be spent!' The insertion of the 'therefore' is not illegitimate: it is the implied conjunction which reveals the secret of the sacrificial life. When Henry Martin reached the shores of India he made this entry in his journal, 'I desire to burn out for my God,' and at the end of the far-off years the secret of his grand enthusiasm stood openly revealed. 'Look at me,' he said to those about him as he was dying—'look at me, the vilest of sinners, but saved by grace! Amazing that I can be saved!' It was that amazement, wondering all through his years, that made him such a fountain of sacrificial energy in the service of his Lord.

Christ fashioned Within

Col. i. 27.—'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'

We are all familiar with the saying that in every man there are three personalities. But a truer reading of human nature modifies this statement. There is only one personality, but that personality lives and moves in three worlds of thought, desire, and will. The first of these three worlds is that of our ordinary thought and our transient feeling as they are expressed in the intercourse of life. The second is the world of inner desire, with its self-communing and unconfessed hopes and fears. But within and behind these two, there is a third realm. It is a world wholly unknown to our fellow-men, and greatly dark to ourselves. It is the Holy of Holies—the shrine of the soul. The other two are only the Outer Court and the Holy Place.

We know how real this inmost sphere of life is. When we were children there were names which were household words, places familiar in every feature, incidents which were the great events of our short history, persons who were our guides. Many of these have melted into the infinite azure of the past. We cannot recall them by any act of will. Yet let some name stand out on a page, or let some word fall upon our ear from a speaker's lips, or let some old faded letter come into our hands, and at once, swimming up out of this secret inmost world, there come the names, faces, events, personalities, upon which we thought death had laid its binding spell. They were not dead; they were only lodging in this inmost world of our being.

The broad law of a victorious Christian life is that Christ must be dominant within the soul. It is not enough that Christ should control the outer court of our life, our judgment, our habits, our intercourse with the world, or even our worship and service. It is not enough that Christ should be the Master in the second

chamber of our being, and that we should think on Him with reverence, and dwell upon Him in quiet meditation, and find our minds glow with tender feeling towards His moral loveliness. Christ must pass in through the two outer courts. He must enter to abide within us, and to hold our will in the hollow of His hand. He must be the indwelling personality who will fashion us like unto Himself. The whole history of the Christian conquest is the fashioning of Christ within.

There are three clearly outlined stages in this fashioning. The first is—*Christ born within*; the second—*Christ formed within*; the third—*Christ perfected within*.

1. *Christ Born Within.*—There is a decisive spiritual change by which a man becomes a Christian. We should not encourage any narrow thoughts about the circumstances of its happening, or the emotions which it arouses, or the words in which it finds expression. We are all so different in age and situation, in our past and even our present, in our training and our temperament, that no two men ever have had the same experience in this vital change. For that reason it is described in Scripture under many names. It is called: 'being renewed in the spirit of your mind'; 'being quickened together with Christ'; 'being called out of darkness into his marvellous light'; 'becoming a little child'; 'awaking as from a deep sleep'; 'passing from death unto life'; 'becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus.' But Jesus always uses the final, the perfect, and the most beautiful word, and He names it—the new birth. Where does this new birth take place? Not in the outer world of daily thought and action, and not in the inner world of self-communing. It takes place in this inmost core of our being. What is it in simplest terms? It is Christ passing into the secret place of our soul, a spiritual presence, to be fashioned within.

To that experience Paul refers in one of his strange words: 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.' We know how Jesus laid siege to Paul. We can mark the steps by which He conquered him. Paul's large, sane, penetrating mind began to understand the wisdom of Christ's words. Jesus in His grace and loveliness began to creep into the study of his imagination. Then Christ passed into the second world of Paul's deeper thought and more wistful desire. The conviction that the way of his walking was not securely right brought forth self-reproaches and strange relentings. The record of that stage of experience is to be found in the words, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' But Christ was not yet born within. There came that moment on the road to Damascus when the great light shined about him, and the voice of Christ rang through him, and the barrier of the shrine was broken down, and Christ passed in to dwell at the centre of his being. God had revealed His Son in Paul.

¶ This is conversion, the passing, as the Bible calls it, from death unto life. Those who have stood by another's side at the solemn hour of this dread possession have been conscious sometimes of an experience which words are not allowed to utter—a something like the sudden snapping of a chain, the waking from a dream.[1]

¶ Martin Luther had a personal experience of Christ as the Forgiver and Saviour. It was that personal experience of Christ's saving grace that fired Luther's soul and touched his lips, and turned the monk into a prophet, and gave him such a mighty gospel that it liberated and regenerated half Europe. It was so also with John Wesley. He was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord as a boy in the vicarage at Epworth. The right belief was his from his early days. He believed in Jesus as the Son of God. That belief sent him out to be a minister in Georgia. But if he had never got beyond that, he would have remained a respectable and ineffective curate to the end of his days. But one day it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son *in* him. The creed was transmuted into an experience. It was his own experience of Christ as a Forgiver that sent him flaming from one end of the land to the other; it was that same experience that made him so mighty a preacher that tens of thousands of people as they listened to him were born again of the Spirit, and religion once more became a reality in England.[2]

2. *Christ Formed Within.*—Every organism at its birth is lowly in its form and function. To use the language of science, it is only an embryo.

[1] Henry Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, 94.
[2] J. D. Jones.

It has few members, feeble capacities, an undeveloped life. When a man is born again he is only a Christian in embryo. Christ comes into his inmost world as the germ of the new life which is yet to flower out into the beauty of holiness. So Paul writes to those who have been born again, but are veined and flawed by faults. 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.' He is setting forth, in his own intense way, his desire to see Christ formed within them in a fuller loveliness.

It may seem that we are speaking in too high, too daring, and too mystic a way when we declare that Christ may be fashioned within the spirit of man. But it should not be a strange thing to any one to say that one personality may possess and pervade another. It is quite within the range of our experience that one personality has become the life and force of another, so as to be formed within. Browning, with his usual insight into the working of the soul, has set this truth in his poem, 'By the Fire-side.' He describes a simple scene. He shows us a husband and wife sitting by the hearth-stone in the evening hour. They have lived in a close and unsullied fellowship. They are both growing old. The husband tells his wife how deeply and potently her personality and character have penetrated his:

> My own, see where the years conduct!
> At first, 'twas something our two souls
> Should mix as mists do; each is sucked
> In each now: on, the new stream rolls,
> Whatever rocks obstruct.

That is the old man's first statement of this strange possession of one personality by another. He recalls the closer, more tender, more potent intimacy of spirit with spirit, as life went on. Then he passes to the scene of the perfect consummation. It came, as they stood at the close of day, on a rustic bridge over a quiet stream:

> A moment after, and hands unseen
> Were hanging the night around us fast;
> But we knew that a bar was broken between
> Life and life: we were mixed at last
> In spite of the mortal screen.

¶ In the seventeenth century there graduated at Aberdeen University in Scotland a young man of twenty by the name of Henry Scougal. He was almost immediately made a professor of philosophy. He died when he was twenty-eight years of age, but he left a little book, written as a letter to a friend who wanted a reasonable view of religion. It reads as though it had been written for our day. He entitled it, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. Back of all differing forms and expressions of religion he saw that religion was just one thing. Here is what he said: 'True religion is the union of the soul with God, a real participation of the Divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul; or, in the Apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us. Briefly, I know not how the nature of religion can be more fully expressed than by calling it . . . the life of God in the soul of man.' [1]

3. *Christ Perfected Within.*—'That God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.' This hope, made confident by the experience of its power, breathes through the aspirations of all the New Testament saints. Paul's prayer is consummated in John's unforgettable anthem, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' What is the reality to which this hope looks out? The day is coming when all that is earthly shall pass away, and all that is temporal shall be no more. What shall remain is this inmost world of our personality, where Christ has been formed within. There shall Christ be perfected. We have been planting our bulbs in the earth in the knowledge that—

> There is a day in spring
> When under all the earth the secret germs
> Begin to stir and grow before they bud.

As the life within begins to move, the outer husks and coverings fall away into death and rottenness. But the life sends up its living green shoots into the world of light and beauty. Then the form of the plant begins to appear, and finally the flower lifts its head in the mellow sunshine. So Christ, born within and formed within, shall, in that new atmosphere of light and love, be perfected, and we shall be

[1] O. T. Olson, *Some Values for To-day*, 46.

'conformed unto the likeness of God's dear Son.'

All this rises up to a solemn issue. It brings us face to face with the alternative which cannot be escaped. Either Christ has been born within, and is passing on to a perfect fashioning, or some other personality is becoming the indwelling and dominant spirit of our inmost being. 'Behold: I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' That is the timeless word of the wondrous music with which Christ seeks entrance that He may be fashioned within. But the shrine will not remain empty. If Christ be denied, some other will enter in. The Evil One will become dominant, and we shall be fashioned unto his likeness, as too many men have been.

Oh, glorious truth and holy,
Of Christ enthroned within;
A kingdom for Him solely,
That once was dark with sin.
My heart in full surrender,
With every pulse and thought
I've opened to the Monarch
Whose love the right has bought.

My Saviour reigning in me
My will no longer mine:
A sanctuary kingdom—
Amazing grace Divine!
The will of my Redeemer
Controlling every power,
His purpose working in me
And through me hour by hour.[1]

[1] Alfred S. Dyer.

EVERY MAN'S CHRIST

Col. i. 28.—'Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.'

No one can read this text without noting the emphasis laid on 'every man.' It is thrice repeated, and the kindred phrase 'in all wisdom' is linked on to it in a way that is most significant. The fact is that St Paul is here standing forth as the champion of the common people who were being cheated out of their rights. He was combating the proud aristocratic spirit which, as we shall see, dominated the thought of the ancient world, and which would have excluded the common people from Christ or would have limited their rights in Him. In this connection we find the Apostle proclaiming principles which are yet far from being cordially accepted, but which are of the very essence of the gospel.

I

Christ for Every Man

He declares in the first place that Christ is for every man without exception and without distinction. Therefore he made his appeal not to the favoured few but to the many. He preached Christ, 'warning every man and teaching every man.' This was something wholly new, something quite alien to the spirit of the world. For human pride is very exclusive, and believes in selection and favouritism. The Jew, as is well known, excluded the Gentile. 'We alone,' they said, 'are the chosen people. All others are mere outsiders. The kingdom is for us and not for them.' This spirit was by no means confined to the Jews. The Greeks were equally exclusive in their pride of intellect, and despised all other nations as barbarians. Neander the Church historian points out, as one of the chief characteristics of the world of St Paul's day, a 'certain aristocratic spirit,' which took for granted and explicitly taught that wisdom and virtue were only possible for the *élite*. 'The higher religious point of view, which necessarily supposed philosophical culture, could not be transferred to the multitude; *they* seemed as it were excluded from the higher life, and incapable of religion except in the form of superstition. The great body of tradesmen and mechanics were considered as unsusceptible of that higher life which alone answered to man's true dignity—as abandoned to common life. . . .

It was not till the word that went forth from the carpenter's lowly roof had been published by fishermen and tent-makers, that these aristocratic notions of the ancient world could be overthrown.'[1]

In this conflict St Paul was the great protagonist. In the name of Christ he made a terrific onslaught on all human pride and exclusiveness. He could not endure for a single moment any barrier to be reared between Christ and the common people. Against his fellow-countrymen the Jews he fought the battle of his life in defence of the truth that the Gentiles have equal rights in the gospel. Against the intellectual exclusiveness of the Greeks he declared that Christ was equally for the barbarians. He firmly held that in Christ all racial and class distinctions are done away. Salvation is for the slave as well as for the free man. He even expressly includes the 'Scythians,' those wild and savage marauders who were the terror of the old world and were regarded as outside the pale of humanity. If these horrible savages were included, then without question Christ was for every man. It was this attitude which so moved the rage and contempt of Celsus, the first great critic of Christianity, and a typical representative of the aristocratic spirit of the ancient world. The Christians, he declared, were inviting to their society all the riff-raff of the nations. 'Whoever is a sinner, or unintelligent, or a fool, in a word, whoever is God-forsaken, him the kingdom of God will receive.'[2]

Now we should be greatly mistaken if we supposed that this spirit of proud exclusiveness was only to be found in the ancient world. Very obviously it is not dead yet. We laugh at the religious pretensions of the Jews, or, when we read of the exclusiveness of caste in India we recognize it as anti-Christian, and we say, 'Caste must fall.' But what about religious exclusiveness among ourselves, the spirit which would limit the grace of Christ to one particular sect or church, that spirit which is rebuked in Browning's *Christmas Day*, where Christ is pictured as finding His way into strange places and bringing His grace to strange people? What about class pride or pride of intellect which rebels at the idea of being ranked with the multitude of common sinners? What about racial pride, which to-day is so serious an element in the world problem? Is there not a widespread and almost instinctive feeling among us that Christ is the peculiar possession of the white man? With what difficulty do we bring ourselves to concede that He is equally the Saviour of the African and the Chinese. Theoretically we make the concession, for we are ashamed flatly to contradict the gospel, but it is significant that when white men are brought into close personal contact with members of the so-called 'lower races' they find it exceedingly hard to hold out to them with any cordiality the right hand of Christian fellowship.

Now this spirit, in whatever form it is manifested, is a most formidable barrier to the progress of the gospel. It would shut out great masses of mankind from their heritage in Christ. It paralyses missionary endeavour. It hardens the heart so that the grace of God cannot be received aright, for 'he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' It even infects the missionary himself in the very act of carrying the gospel to all the world. For no complaint is commoner among men of other races than that the missionary, quite unconsciously and unintentionally, adopts towards them an attitude of superiority. He may be exceedingly kind, but they are subtly made to feel that it is the kindness of condescension.

Unless this spirit is purged out neither the world nor the Church can be saved. Ezekiel made that very plain to the men of his time. Jerusalem was reeking with racial and religious pride. Sodom and Samaria had fallen but she had no pity nor fellow-feeling for them. 'Thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride' (Ezk. xvi. 56). At last Jerusalem fell, and the prophet reads the lesson of her fall and points out the only way of her return. 'When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them.' Note the words '*in the midst of them*.' Manifestly the prophet has a vision of a new Jerusalem, humbled and purified, holding out hands of fellowship to those whom she before despised. She now sees that they are all on an equal footing as sinners dependent on the Divine mercy, and so at last, arm in arm, they come

[1] Neander, *Church History*, i. 40.
[2] *Apud* Origen, c. *Celsum*, iii. 44.

home to God. There is the right spirit, the only spirit in which we can hopefully preach the gospel among the nations. The exclusiveness of human pride, that chilling air of superiority which blew so cuttingly across the hills of Judah, and which blows down the aisles of many a church to-day, is death to the Christian spirit. Christ is not exclusively yours or mine; He is every man's. 'General Booth, in the earlier days of the Army, confessed that he was forced to make a choice; no man's arms are long enough, he said, to reach out to give a hand to the rich and to the people of the depths.'[1] An honest confession, and doubtless true enough! But, thank God, there are no such limitations in Christ, no shortening of His arm that it cannot save. He reaches out to every class and to every race. 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' was His parting charge. There you see the same emphasis as we find in our text. Paul, in short, in declaring that Christ is for every man, was simply interpreting the marching orders of the Church and obeying them in the spirit in which they were given.

II

The Whole of Christ for Every Man

Further, St Paul emphasizes the fact that the whole of Christ is for every man. He made it his practice in preaching Christ to teach every man 'in all wisdom.' He kept back nothing from any man. He had not one gospel for the learned and another for the unlearned. To all, without distinction, he offered the whole riches of Christ.

Here, again, St Paul is standing forth as the champion of the common people and the opponent of the aristocratic spirit of the ancient world. For in his day it was taken for granted that wisdom was for the elect few. The deep things of God were beyond the plain man. Plato himself had said, 'The Father and Maker of this universe it is hard to find, and when one has found Him, to declare Him to every man is impossible.'[2] In accordance with this idea it became customary among the philosophers to distinguish between esoteric and exoteric doctrine. A few common truths might be broadcast, but the more precious must be reserved for the inner circle of disciples. They alone were competent to worship in the temple of truth, the multitude must for ever remain in the outer court. The same spirit pervaded the religious systems of the day. In apostolic times what are known as 'mystery religions' were most popular. In connection with these there were elaborate rites of initiation and oaths of secrecy. They promised salvation, but only to the initiate, and these initiate were bound by oath not to divulge the saving truth to outsiders. This exclusive spirit made great headway even among the Jews. Their strictest sect, the Essenes, which though not mentioned in the Gospels was very influential at that time, is thus described. 'They too had their esoteric doctrine which they looked upon as the exclusive possession of the privileged few, their "mysteries" which it was a grievous offence to communicate to the uninitiated. . . . Their whole organization was arranged so as to prevent the divulgence of its secrets to those without. The long period of noviciate, the careful rites of initiation, the distinction of several orders in the community, the solemn oaths by which they bound their members, were so many safeguards against a betrayal of this precious deposit, which they held to be restricted to the inmost circle of the brotherhood.'[1]

There is evidence that this spirit had begun to make its presence felt inside the Christian Church even in St Paul's day, and doubtless that accounts for the emphasis he lays here upon 'teaching every man in all wisdom.' The seeds were already being sown of that movement which in the second century became so widespread and influential, and which we know as gnosticism. The gnostics, inheriting the exclusive spirit of the pagan philosophers, said, 'Simple faith may serve for the plain man, but we have got beyond that into the higher region of knowledge.' They considered themselves the *élite* of the Christian community, and by their wild and heady speculations they led many away from the simplicity of the gospel into barren regions of vanity.

It is manifest that this spirit is utterly unchristian in respect of the fact that it despairs of the common people. Plotinus, a famous philosopher of early Christian times, distinguished two classes of men, the noble-minded

[1] W. M. Macgregor, *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, 245.
[2] *Timæus*.

[1] Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 92.

who could attain to a knowledge of God, and the gross multitude, the wretched mass of day-labourers who were necessarily engrossed with the cares of daily life and abandoned themselves to all that is vile. Thus the mass of the people were disinherited, shut out from the true knowledge of God, and left an easy prey to superstition and priestcraft. It has often been remarked that the loftiest philosophy is strangely tolerant of the grossest idolatry, and here we see the reason. The common people are to be left to their superstitions because they are not capable of anything higher. Wisdom and the true knowledge of God are not for them. Romanism, which contains so many subtle elements derived from ancient paganism, is in some degree infected with this spirit. Rome says to the common people, 'The mysteries of religion are beyond your understanding, but the priest has spiritual knowledge and power. Therefore the best that you can do is to leave yourself in his hands.' Thus there is fostered a spirit of blind and superstitious trust.

In opposition to all this the gospel insistently offers the whole of Christ to every man. There are no esoteric doctrines, no higher mysteries reserved for the elect few. Throw wide the temple doors so that all may enter who will. Protestantism is in this connection a great reaffirmation of the Pauline doctrine that all the riches of Christ are for every believer. The veil is rent and the way is open, not for the priest alone but for every man, into the most holy place. Just as the true teacher communicates his learning without reserve in order that the student may himself become master of the subject, so the preacher of the gospel must keep back nothing, but teach 'every man in all wisdom.' The Pauline principle might be illustrated from the practice of medicine. At first the healing art was simply a matter of incantations and charms. The medicine man was believed to have the secret of knowledge and power, and the common people could do nothing else but blindly follow him. The attitude of many to-day to their medical adviser is little changed. But now that medicine is an exact science it is recognized that all the people should be fully instructed in all the laws of health so that they may obey them with intelligence. So did St Paul labour to bring every man to a full knowledge of the gospel and an intelligent faith in Christ.

III

Every Man Perfect in Christ

Finally, the end in view was to 'present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' The word which St Paul uses here for 'perfect' (τέλειος) is a word which was commonly used in connection with the mystery religions. It meant the fully initiate, those who had attained to the highest degree, those to whom the inmost secrets of the faith had been revealed. Now, as we have seen, this degree of attainment was only possible for the *élite*. The multitude must lag far behind and be content to remain at a much lower level. Obviously if the true knowledge of God is beyond the comprehension of the common man, then the truly godlike life must also be beyond his reach. A double standard of truth involves, of necessity, a double standard of morality. This may be seen in the teaching and practice of the Church of Rome, where the truly religious life is possible only for the few, while a lower moral standard is tolerated among the multitude as the best that can be expected of them. It may be argued that this is in accordance with the facts of human life as we find them, but we cannot but feel that St Paul would have passionately opposed all such distinctions and all such toleration of a second best. Just as in his proclamation of the gospel he included every man and offered to every man the whole riches of grace, so it was his aim to present every man perfect in Christ.

What a faith in the possibilities of human nature! What a faith in the power of the gospel the Apostle must have had to enable him to speak like that after all his years of toil and suffering! For he was no young crusader belting on his armour in a spirit of unclouded optimism, and hasting out hot-foot in his inexperience to regenerate the world. St Paul was by this time a war-worn veteran. He had been scorned and persecuted, had found friends who proved false and converts who failed; better than any other man he knew the ruggedness of this tough old world. Few could have endured so much without being utterly disillusioned. It is a common experience that early visions pass like dissolving views and the glow of early enthusiasms grows cold. Browning has pictured in Sordello a

brilliant dreamer who went forth at dawn among the people to make his dream of a better world a solid reality. But very soon amid the squalid city streets his vision faded. He began to question,

Are this and this and this the shining ones
Meet for the Shining City? [1]

and he went home at night a disillusioned man, 'a perished husk.' St Paul had spent his life among the great cities of the ancient heathen world and he knew their vileness down to its lowest depths, but he would have answered Sordello's question with a glorious affirmative. 'Yes, by the grace of Christ every one of these may yet be made "shining ones meet for the Shining City."'

Ruskin in his *Ethics of the Dust* has a very striking suggestion. Take an ounce of mud, he says, 'slime of a damp over-trodden path, in the outskirts of a manufacturing town. . . . That slime we shall find in most cases composed of clay mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. All these elements are at helpless war with each other, and destroy reciprocally each other's nature and power, competing and fighting for place at every tread of your foot; sand squeezing out clay, and clay squeezing out water, and soot meddling everywhere, and defiling the whole. Let us suppose that this ounce of mud is left in perfect rest, and that its elements gather together, like to like, so that their atoms may get into the closest relations possible.' Then the clay might become a sapphire, the sand an opal, the soot a diamond and the water a dewdrop or snow. 'And, thus, for the ounce of slime, we have a sapphire, an opal, and a diamond, set in the midst of a star of snow.' So may we hope and labour 'for the time when the Dust of the generations of men shall be confirmed for the foundations of the gates of the city of God.'

Is this really possible, or is it merely a poet's dream? With complete and passionate conviction St Paul would have said, 'It is possible —*in Christ*.' 'If any man be *in Christ* he is a new creature,' and there are no limits to what he may become. For the perfection of which the Apostle speaks is not a perfection of culture but of faith. 'It is that surrender of the *will* which is involved in the act of personal faith in the living, saving Person of Jesus Christ. That is Christian perfection. All other excellence flows from that. All ideal perfection is latent in that. All moral character, all sanctity, is in its germ in that. The man of faith is perfect before God because his will and person is in the relation to God which is God's will for him. . . . To be perfect with God you must have Christ come *home*, come HOME to you, and sit by your central fire—come home to *you*, to YOU, as if for the moment mankind were centred in the burning point of your soul, and you touched the burning point of God's.' [1]

Yes, it is possible, gloriously possible, through His power 'who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.' And it is the preacher's privilege, as it was St Paul's, to proclaim to every man, 'This Christ is yours. However ignorant and sinful, however low and brutish you may be, in all the plenitude of His grace and truth and power He is for YOU.'

J. H. MORRISON

The Wisdom of Jesus

Col. ii. 3.—'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'

1. IN the Old Testament we find a great deal of very wholesome teaching as to the true nature of wisdom, teaching which the world has not yet taken sufficiently seriously. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' To be truly wise, we must strive to understand the will of God. Measures which are based merely on self-interest or prudence, or expediency or compromise, which are devised merely to meet the needs of the moment, and which are conceived from a selfish individual or national standpoint, are mere counsels of folly.

St Paul wrote that in Christ 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' He said many profound things, but never anything profounder than that. He did not mean that Jesus Christ was wise with the wisdom of the universities, that the treasures of literary, scientific, and historical knowledge were hid in Him. He did not mean that, although we may believe he would have said that the key to the interpretation of history is in Jesus Christ, and that if the scientist will sit at His feet he will

[1] Browning, *Sordello*, v. 10.

[1] P. T. Forsyth, *Christian Perfection*, 84, 150.

see a fresh vision of the glory which is behind the phenomena which he investigates. But the wisdom of which Paul is speaking is moral and spiritual. It is even more profound than purely intellectual wisdom, but it is not so much the product of processes of ratiocination as of undimmed vision and swift and penetrating intuition.

Jesus does not, like most philosophers, approach life and its problems from the speculative standpoint, but from that of the soul and its needs. 'What doth it profit a man,' He says, 'if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' He regards every treatment of life's difficulties as superficial which does not take account of the soul. Are we concerned with social questions which relate to food and clothing? Jesus says, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' The secret of civilization is not primarily in outward conditions, but in the soul. The soul that loves God with all its faculties reacts on its environment and transforms it. That, according to the wisdom of Jesus, is the secret of progress.

¶ A prophet has many things to say to his generation; one only is his message. Jesus treated every idea of the first order in the sphere of Religion; His burden was Life. He did not set Himself to teach men how to organize the state, nor how to analyse their minds, nor how to discharge elementary duties, nor how to form a science of Theology. This was not because Jesus despised these departments, it was because He proposed to dominate them. He would not localize Himself in one because He would inspire all. Behind the state is the individual, behind the individual is the soul, and the one question of the soul is life.[1]

This is the kind of wisdom which the Apostle has in mind. It is that which is concerned with God and His ways and His relation to the world and to man. It is that which has reference to man and the devious ways of the human heart and man's relation to his fellows. If you want to be wise in the knowledge of God and of the human heart, if you want to be wise in the mysteries of existence and in the principles on which the moral universe is grounded, if you want to be wise in love and goodness and service, if you want to be wise in your relations with your fellow-men and in your conceptions of social and international organization and order, then sit at the feet of Jesus Christ, 'in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.'

The very simplicity of the teaching of Jesus hides from us its profundity. It is so simple that a little child can understand it, and it is so profound that the greatest philosophers have not fully fathomed it. We have only dug into the surface as yet. As we dig deeper, we shall find that there is guidance there for all our perplexities.

We read the spiritual philosophers. They lead us along devious paths, but at the end of the journey we find that most of them only give us an attenuated version of the wisdom of Jesus. We read the moral philosophers. We may often disagree with their arguments and differ from some of their explanations of the authority of conscience. But when we look at their conclusions, when we ask them what it is that the moral life demands of us, we find that most of them do but echo the wisdom of Jesus. We turn to the social reformers. We may agree or disagree with their political and economic theories, and may think their legislative measures right or wrong. But when we ask how they want to organize human life, what kind of a society they desire to establish, what relations they wish to see existing between man and man, we find that many of them, too, echo the wisdom of Jesus, and we have a suspicion that, though they may not confess it, they have been sitting at His feet.

If only our leaders of thought and action would set themselves, deliberately and frankly, to learn of Jesus, the solution of many problems that baffle us would be clear as the day. If only we took seriously Christ's teaching as to the soul and the body, wealth and poverty, love and righteousness, humility and service, and brought all the resources of our minds and hearts and wills to bear on the task of discovering the implications and applications of His precepts, we should find the highway that leads to the City of God. We should have to alter many of our opinions, change many of our conceptions of value; and make many personal and national sacrifices, but we should not be able to complain that we did not know the way.

¶ Professor E. F. Scott says in his preface to *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*: 'To-day, as never before, Jesus stands out as the moral

[1] Ian Maclaren, *The Mind of the Master*, 67.

leader of humanity. The principles which He laid down have been vindicated through the bitter experiences of the last few years, and men of all opinions are now agreed that the society of the future can be securely built on no other foundation.'

2. The wisdom of Jesus is embodied not merely in the records of His teaching, but in His living personality. We grow wise, not simply by reading the gospel story, but through fellowship with the living Christ. We often hear the cry, 'Back to the Jesus of History'; and we cannot study too closely the details of the one life that has been lived without sin among men and that shone with the fullness of the Father's glory. But do not let us forget that, at the end of that path, we shall find only a partial portrait of the Christ. If we are to know Jesus and the wisdom of Jesus, we must study Paul and John as well as the Synoptists. The Synoptists show Jesus Christ against the background of Galilee, Judæa, and Samaria; Paul and John show Him against the background of the universe. The Synoptists show Jesus Christ against the background of the first century; Paul and John show Him against the background of the eternities. And we must see Jesus Christ in that wider setting if we are to understand His deepest and most transforming message to our race. It is then that we begin to understand that the wisdom of Jesus is not merely philosophical or moral or social or economic, but *saving* wisdom.

We have all met wise men who were very ineffective. They knew everything, except how to pass on to others the secrets which they had learned, and how to apply their knowledge. There was no dynamic, no energy, no power in their wisdom. But the wisdom of Jesus is instinct with energy and alive with power. His words and precepts are not like the cut-and-dried maxims of the schools; they are spirit and life. Jesus knows how to pass His secret on to those who love Him, and His words become in them fiery energies that transfigure and transform them, and that bring them under an inner compulsion to remould and refashion the world. The wisdom of Jesus is not a heritage from the dead past, but the expression of a mind that thinks and a heart that loves in the world of to-day. Tennyson speaks of Christianity as 'truth embodied in a tale.' But that is an imperfect description of the gospel. Christianity is more than 'truth embodied in a tale'; it is truth embodied in a living, loving, all-conquering Personality. That is why the wisdom of Jesus is full of saving and transforming energy and power.

It is no easy task that confronts us if we are to unfold and apply the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in Jesus Christ. We shall need to exercise all the powers of our intellect if we are to learn how to apply the great principles of the gospel of Christ to the complex problems of to-day. The task is also one that will make demands on our hearts and wills. It will test the resources of our personality—our steadfastness, our faith, our hope, our love—to the utmost. We shall often be discouraged and disappointed and tempted to yield to inertia. We shall only endure if the fires of a holy passion are kindled within us. Nothing great is ever achieved without passion, and passion is kindled, not merely as we read the words of Jesus written in the Gospels, but as those words are burnt into our hearts by our crucified and risen Lord.

Walking in Christ

Col. ii. 6, 7.—'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.'

St Paul assures his readers that he has no doubt of their zeal and fidelity. He rejoices to note the solid front of their faith in Christ. Their faith has stood every test thus far, and for this very reason he is anxious to warn them. But always his counsels are dynamics of stimulus and inspiration. The text is no exception, but rather a characteristic word of the Apostle's. It begins with the words, 'As ye have received the Lord Jesus,' and it ends with the words, 'Abound therein with thanksgiving.' On the one hand, there is a certain receptive act, and on the other hand, there is the ripe attainment of thanksgiving. But what lies between the two extremes? How is the Christian life to be lived successfully, unwaveringly?

1. *Receiving Christ.*—'As ye have received the Lord Jesus.' The words suggest something

presented, something occupied. They denote the acceptance of an offer, the entertainment of a guest. They are suggestive of a host waiting at the door the arrival of a guest. Who is the guest? 'Christ Jesus, Lord,' all His titles, as in some stately function and ceremonial all the family names are recited and proclaimed. He stands at the door as Christ Jesus, Lord, and He asks for entertainment—Christ the anointed One, the promised Messiah; Jesus, the son of man, our companion in the common way; Lord, wearing Divine dignities and powers altogether unshared by mortal man. That is the waiting guest, the stranger at the gate—and they received Him. How did they receive Him? First of all, by an act of mind. They opened the doors of their mind to let Him in. They were not blinded by prejudice; they were not imprisoned by bigotry; they did not refuse to think; they were not atrophied by indifference. They opened the doors and the windows of their mind to let in the light and the glory that remained outside. And they received Him by an act of heart, which simply means that they laid no embargo on their sentiments, they allowed their feelings honest play. And they received Him with an act of will, because to receive the Lord Jesus as a guest was to defy convention. It was to dare all consequences. It was to encounter loss, and so demanded courage and persistent exercise of the will.

2. *Walking in Him.*—Since they had received the Lord Jesus—their Christian love had shown it—the Apostle's counsel is 'Walk in him.' It seems as if we have here the figure of an estate into which someone has come by right of inheritance; and what should we think of a man who was heir to some spacious domain, and then built for himself a little hut on the very confines of his inheritance, and settled down there to a dark, limited, dreary life? We should say to him, 'You have got your estate; walk in it. Exercise your rights and your liberties in it. Explore its natural beauties; taste its fruits; unearth its treasures; walk in it.' And says the Apostle Paul, 'Ye have received the Lord Jesus; walk in him.' Claim your liberty; exercise your prerogatives; move freely about in the Lord Jesus, not as a bond slave, but as heir and as son. He says, do not be hampered in your movements. You are a kind of subsidiary lord of the estate. Exercise your freedom.

He points out two ways in which their liberty may be curtailed. He says there are certain presences round about them which will seek to prohibit their doings, to limit their wanderings. For instance, says the Apostle, you will find that other mediators will appear seeking to gain your homage. You will find philosophies appearing, and these philosophies will obtrude angels and principalities and powers, and these obtruded presences will threaten your liberty, and seek to despoil you of the real contents of your estate. All manner of subtle philosophies may steal over the threshold of your mind and seek to impair your freedom; but, says the Apostle Paul, 'Walk in him.' Ignore them; brush past them. We know that the Papacy—just to mention it in a sentence—sought to obstruct the spiritual freedom of Martin Luther, and to interfere with the liberty of his movements in Christ Jesus. We know that men sought, by human prohibitions, to impair the liberty of our Puritan forefathers, and they ignored the prohibitions, as Martin Luther ignored the limitations set before him by the Papacy.

And, secondly, you will find people trying to hem you in, and to imprison you by multitudinous petty rules. You will find people round about you who will try to despoil you of a principle, and in place of a principle they will give you a rule. You will find that you will be in danger of being confined and smothered by innumerable prohibitions. All over the place will be a series of negations seeking to hamper your liberty in Christ. Then he gives a sample of that, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.' Their life was becoming filled with these negations, and Paul mentions them to despise them, to disparage them, to pay no heed to them, to ignore them. These perils are always near. Religious life is always in danger, and always threatened to be reduced to a thousand prohibitions. Do not let your life be determined by petty rules. Let it be determined by large principles. Exercise your liberty in Christ Jesus.

3. *Rooted and built up in Him.*—It is possible, however, for the finest liberty to become degenerate. Everybody knows that liberty may riot into licence. And so we have the Apostle's

warning, 'Walk in him, rooted and built up in him.' The metaphor is an apparently violent one. We are to walk and yet be stationary. But the metaphor is purposely mixed to bring out two separate ideas. The faith of the Christian is to be something fixed once for all; the conduct which rests on it is to be always growing like a house in process of building. Everybody knows that the area of the rootage of a tree is commensurate with the amplitude of its branches, that the limited outspread of a poplar is matched by the limited outspread of its roots, that the more spacious contour and reach of an oak is also matched by the more spacious acreage of its roots. The principle in real life, in horticultural life, speaking broadly and generally, is this, that visibility is matched by invisibility, that rootage keeps pace with the outspreading and visible life of the tree. And it is just there that the Apostle gives us his word of counsel. He says, 'Walk in him.' Do not be afraid to grow—you never honour God by dwarfhood. Our Lord is not going to be pleased if our powers are stunted, and if, when we but branch out, we are limited, impoverished, starved, and dwarfed. And, therefore, reach out, but look after your roots, and while you allow the visible life to spread, see to it that the invisible life keeps pace with it. There is nothing, next to real vice, which dishonours Christ more than an impoverished and arrested human power.

Let every power and faculty of life have fine reach and glorious spread. Exercise what power or faculty you may choose—wit, humour, ideality, but let all be rooted in Christ. And so with every interest in life, if we are going to branch out and make ourselves full grown men and women, let us do it gladly and freely, if only as we lengthen our cords we strengthen our stakes, and as the branches spread we look after the vitality and range of the roots—our industrial interests, our educational interests, our political interests, our recreational interests—to see to it that they have glorious range, but, at the same time, that they are rooted in the Lord.

¶ Francis Bacon had one of the most useful and able minds ever entrusted to a man. When he was scarcely fifteen years old, the great thought took possession of him that the ancient method of studying nature was wrong, and that he was meant to right it. The spirit in which he went about that work, the results of which have put the world eternally in his debt, is fairly indicated by a memorandum written in his early forties, and never intended for publicity: 'Believing that I was born for the service of mankind, and regarding the care of the commonwealth as a kind of common property, which, like the air and the water, belongs to everybody, I set myself to consider in what way mankind might best be served, and what service I was myself best fitted by nature to perform.' Moreover, he had moral insight of a high order, as is shown by his essays, which still remain classic in the literature of ethics. His life was not blameless, but he probably would have lived and died in respectability had it not been for his advancement in power. He was made Lord Chancellor of England. He was created Viscount St Albans. He moved out into an extended opportunity and became, not only the most learned man in the empire, but also one of the most powerful. And then he fell. Convicted of gross bribery and financial corruption, to which he abjectly confessed, he lived his last five years a disgraced man. The length of his ropes got beyond the strength of his stakes.[1]

The Apostle passes next to the architectural figure—a difference in figure, but precisely similar in content and significance. We are to move about with great and distinctive freedom, and yet to be as stationary as a building. We are to lay every liberty squarely and fairly upon Jesus, as upon a foundation; to take every project, every proposal, every programme, and ask, does it rest congruously and securely upon Him, and does it harmonize with the dictates of the royal plumb-line, or is it a bulging wall? Every policy, every ambition, every programme, every new interest, can that rest in the Lord? Can we lay it upon Him as an orderly contribution to a stable and glorious pile that nothing can shake? If not, it must be flung to the waste-heap as something He cannot countenance and therefore as something which cannot enrich.

Suppose that we have received the Lord Jesus Christ, in the first place tentatively, fearingly, tremblingly; and suppose now we are walking in Him, rooted and built up in Him, what kind of a character will be pro-

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 19.

duced? The Apostle says that it will be described by spiritual vigour. He uses the word 'stablished.' The word which is translated as 'stablished' is our word 'basis.' It means the strength of a foundation, going up into an edifice, and giving firmness and solidity to whatever is reared upon it. It is not merely a passive foundation, it is a foundation contributing its strength to the over-structure. It means that if a man is walking in the Lord Jesus, rooted and built up in Him, he will be characterized by force of character. His movements will not be dubious, indecisive, uncertain. Says the Apostle in a holy, jubilant boast, 'God hath not given us the spirit of trembling,' as if we were on a rickety foundation. The life that receives the Lord Jesus, and that walks in Him, rooted and built up in Him, will be characterized as 'stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

¶ Dr Alexander M'Laren of Manchester wrote of his father, Mr David M'Laren: 'His children set on his tombstone the two words, "Stedfast, unmoveable." So they thought of him then; and so those of them who are left think of him now. A son reverently declares that he has never met a man whose hold on the great verities of the gospel was more tenacious, or one whose life was more ruled by, and established in, the faith of these.'

Rooted

Col. ii. 7.—'Rooted . . . in him.'

1. THERE is a great deal of interest in Christ at the present time. It is doubtful if in all the history of Christianity since the very earliest days there has ever been so much; but there is a danger in that very interest. Things which are widespread are apt to be superficial, and *that* is just where the danger lies. The interest is largely superficial, emotional, intellectual, but there is not much *will* in it. Christ is made as attractive as possible, and as little as possible is demanded of those who would follow Him.

But that is not the Christ that we know in the Gospels. The Christ to whom we owe nothing but admiration is ineffective. He does not go deep enough. If we are to receive from Christ what He came to give us we must do more than look upon Him from the outside and admire Him. We must be ourselves 'rooted in him.'

What does it mean? It means more than admiring Him. It means living by Him. It means more even than believing Him. It means—to use the words of the New Testament—'believing *on* him,' that is to say, trusting ourselves to Him. It means living by Him. It means making Him our life, our hope, our all. It is what St Paul means when he says, 'to me to live is Christ.'

How often Christ speaks of 'abiding' in Him. In the fifteenth chapter of John the word occurs again and again, and it occurs more frequently in the original than it does in our translation. Instead of 'abide' our translators have sometimes rendered the word 'continue.' For instance, in the ninth verse, 'as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.' That is the same word as is translated 'abide' twice in the next verse. 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.' Then again in the very next verse the same word is translated 'remain.' 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.' If they had translated the word every time by 'abide' we should have seen far more clearly the tremendous emphasis that Christ puts upon the necessity of our being *part* of Him. Instead of looking upon Him and admiring Him from a distance we must belong to Him. We must suffer when He suffers; we must rejoice when He rejoices; we must draw our nourishment from Him, and so be able to do the work which He has given us to do. We must be rooted in Him.

¶ We are told in ecclesiastical history that the early Christians were ridiculed by the surrounding pagans when they made use of that peculiar phrase 'in Christ' to express the close and intimate relationship in which they stood to their Lord. They were called 'Christ-bearers,' because they were supposed to carry their God about with them in their souls. The ordinary relations of life could throw no light upon the strange phrase, for however closely one might be related to a fellow-creature, however much indebted by service to another, he could not by any stretch of language be said to be in that person. A man could not be said to be in his friend; a pupil could not be said

to be in his teacher; a Jew could not speak of himself as being in Moses because he observed the law which Moses instituted; a Greek scholar could not say he was in Socrates or Plato because he was a disciple of one of those philosophers; and yet universally throughout the early Christian Church this phrase was employed, not as a figurative expression denoting some fellowship or discipleship, but as the most intense and vital truth of all realities, affecting every other aspect of Christianity, and imparting to them a power which no mere doctrinal teaching could have given.

2. There are three uses of a root.

(1) *It is necessary for the life of a plant.*—Cut the plant off from its root and it dies. And as with the plant so with us—the soil is Christ; we have to throw our roots deep down into Him. Cut off from the soil the plant certainly perishes, and we perish also if we are cut off from Christ. Of course we can have a bodily life without Him. A man may be perfectly vigorous of body who has no more of Christ in Him than an ox. And we may have a social life without Him. But we shall not have a spiritual life unless we are rooted in Christ, and if we have not a spiritual life the social and bodily life do not count for much.

We see this most clearly when we think of death. And by this Christ does not mean the death of the body. You remember what He said to Martha after the death of Lazarus? 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, *even though he have died*, yet shall he be alive.' What He meant was that although Lazarus had died bodily, he was yet spiritually alive. Then He went on to say, 'Whosoever is alive, and believeth in me, shall never die.'

So in order to be alive, we must believe in Him. We must be united *to* Him. We must be rooted *in* Him; for that is the first use of the root—it is necessary for the life of the plant.

(2) *It carries nourishment to the plant.*—In all soils, earths, and rocks there are certain salts, which are as necessary to the life of the plant as iron is necessary to our blood. To get these salts out of the earth and to get them into the plant is the work the root has to perform. To do this it is furnished with a number of little fine wavy rootlets; these are the subtle tongues of the root, by which it first tastes, and then separates and eats the diet on which its life, and the plant's, depends. When these are eaten the root performs another function; it does not always at once send all the nourishment up into the plant; it is eminently a wise and thrifty housekeeper; it stores up the nourishment, as in the bulb of crocus or hyacinth, or as in the radish, or carrot, or potato, and so the root becomes a storehouse or refuge to feed the little plant in its infancy, and to protect it in bad and barren times if they should come. All this work of eating is done, not by the great thick roots, but by the little delicate wavy tips; they choose, they appropriate, they convey, and their choice it is which gives the varied autumn tints to the separate trees.

The waste and wear of the Christian life must be constantly repaired. Nor can it be repaired in public assembly or in seasons of religious fervour. Then and there we get the stimulus for repair, but the growth-processes are in quiet, in unseen meditation, and in more delicate and minute operations; they are eminently personal. Faith sometimes loses its force and realness, love loses its fire, our ideals become commonplace, our enthusiasm wanes, our aspiration becomes dulled. Now the food necessary to remedy this is simply Christ, and only Christ. He alone can re-inspire ideals, nourish energy, fire love, make faith real. The personality and love of the living Christ are the only food of the Spirit's more sensitive roots. In a word, we live in Him, and the measure in which He nourishes us is at once the measure of our health, our strength, and our life.

Unless there be in us a root-life ever feeding on Christ we cannot endure. This is what Christ calls 'abiding in Him'; without that abiding we are nothing and can be nothing.[1]

(3) *It keeps the plant in its place.*—Trees are not easily blown down. When a tree is easily blown down you will notice that its roots run along the surface of the ground and do not go deep down into it. Trees have to be kept in their place, and the roots do that for them.

And we cannot leave Christ. We are rooted in Him and abide there. We may be tossed by tempests like a tree, sorrow or pain may come upon us, but as long as we are rooted in Christ these things are only blessings to us.

[1] R. H. Lovell, *First Types of the Christian Life*, 260.

We may not feel them so at the moment any more than the tree when it is being tossed by the wind may feel that it is all for its good, but, afterwards, we find that suffering and sorrow bring forth the fruits of righteousness in them that are exercised thereby.

Christ our Ideal

Col. ii. 8.—'After Christ.'

1. In the verse from which the text is taken St Paul is describing and condemning the false doctrine by which many of the Colossian Christians were being led astray. There are three phrases with which the Apostle brands it. It is 'after the tradition of men': it goes no further back and no higher up for its origin than that. It is 'after the rudiments of the world': it is elementary, meet only for babes; mundane, material, unfit for them who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. And it is not 'after Christ': it has no kind of relation to Him; He is neither its source, nor its substance, nor its standard. And this is the climax of the Apostle's indictment; for the supreme test by which to try everything that calls itself 'Christian' is just this, is it 'after Christ'?

It may serve still better to bring out the significance of this suggestive phrase if we set over against it two or three parallel phrases from St Paul's Epistles. Thus he tells the Galatians that the gospel which he preached was 'not after man'; and exactly what he means by that he goes on to explain in the words which follow: 'For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.' So, again, he tells the Ephesians that 'aforetime'—that is, before their conversion—they 'walked after the course of this world, after the prince of the power of the air.' And if still further illustration be needed, we may find it in the familiar Pauline antithesis which bids us walk not 'after the flesh' but 'after the spirit.'

St Paul, then, teaches us that all doctrine and all life, if they are to be in any true and worthy sense 'Christian,' must be neither 'after man' nor 'after the flesh,' nor 'after the course of this world'—in these can be neither their origin nor their rule—but they must be 'after Christ.' The Apostle uses the words here as a test of doctrine; but they are no less valid as a test of life.

Whatever doubts we may have concerning this or that Christian doctrine, no one doubts that life 'after Christ' is life at its highest, life at its best. The fair moral ideal which Christ set before us has never been surpassed; the type of character which He revealed in His words and realized in His life has never been superseded. Nay, rather, may we not say that since Christ came all other ideals have vanished, as the stars pale their ineffectual fires when the day dawns, and the sun begins his lonely march through the emptied heavens? Other masters fail us; we outgrow them and leave them behind us. But who outgrows Christ? When does He fail us? 'The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.' And they who have drunk deepest best know how exhaustless the living waters are.

¶ 'Jesus,' says Matthew Arnold, 'as He appears in the Gospels . . . is in the jargon of modern philosophy an absolute'—we cannot get beyond Him. Such, likewise, is the verdict of Goethe: 'Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress, and the human mind expand, as much as it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevation of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the Gospels, the human mind will not advance.'

2. Christ, then, is the standard of the Christian; life 'after Christ' is for him the ideal life. But is such a life possible? Is not the standard too high? Two or three brief suggestions may be offered in reply.

(1) As a matter of fact the ideal has, in some measure at least, actually been realized. It is a simple historical fact that there exists in the world to-day, that since the days of Christ there has always existed, a type of character which may be truly called 'Christian,' which, indeed, cannot truly be called by another name, and which, speaking generally, has been and is still only to be found within the Church of Christ. So that, if there are many who are unworthy, there are many, too, whose lives are a daily manifestation of the grace and power of Christ. And if there are many, even among the followers of Christ, who never remind us of Him, there are some, at least, who remind us of no one so much as they remind us of Him. And

if, as a working man once put it, in his rough, quaint fashion, the trouble with so many of us is that we 'ain't up to sample,' well, thank God, it is also true that there are some, the winning grace and fair beauty of whose lives are the best help we know to the understanding of the sinless years of the Son of Man.

¶ Several years ago, when Dr F. B. Meyer was addressing an audience at Brighton, he saw among the company Dr and Mrs Handley Moule. Dr Moule, who afterwards became Bishop of Durham, was detained in conversation at the close of the meeting; and Dr Meyer, as he walked out with Mrs Moule, remarked to her, 'We all have reason to be grateful to your husband for his books.'

The reply, according to *The British Weekly*, which related the incident when Bishop Moule died, was a beautiful tribute from a wife to a husband: 'I have seen every one of these books lived.' [1]

(2) And if still we think the standard, whatever it may be for others, impossible for us, may not the question fairly be asked, if we have ever seriously set ourselves to attain to it, if we have ever taken the trouble to *live*—to live 'after Christ'—which other men take in order to write or to paint or to sing. Ruskin tells us that during the investigation that he has been able to give to the lives of the artists whose works are in all points noblest, 'no fact ever looms so large upon me, no law remains so steadfast in the universality of its application, as the fact and law that they are all great workers.' 'Nobody,' says Robert Louis Stevenson, 'ever had such pains to learn a trade as I; but I slogged at it day in and day out'; and in the end, as every one knows, he had his reward. When, when shall we be willing to take half the pains to be good that men and women all the world over are ready to take in order to be clever? Why, we will not even take the trouble to learn what life 'after Christ' means. And see what comes of it. Because we do not know, because, for example, we have never learned what is the Christian law of courtesy, every day we wound our brethren and sin against Christ with our rough and heedless words and ways. Like people in church who sing flat and put every one around them 'out' because they have no ear for music, so there are multitudes who spoil the music of life because they lack that delicate spiritual sensitiveness to which every jarring note is an exquisite pain, and which only comes through long companionship with Jesus. To live 'after Christ'—is there any nobler aim that a man can set before himself than that? Is it not worth while to give all diligence that we may make its attainment sure?

(3) Still do we say 'impossible'? Then let us remember that Christ who is our ideal is also much more than our ideal. 'After' is not the only New Testament preposition which describes our relation to Him and His to us. Before we can live 'after' Him, He must live 'in' us; before He can live 'in' us, He must lay down His life 'for' us. Christ *is* our Example; but He has other and greater names than this: He is our Friend, our Lord, our Life, our *Saviour*. And until He be our Saviour He can never be our Example; until He be within us as our new life, it is in vain that He stands before us as our ideal. Shall we not, therefore, learn to pray with Dora Greenwell:

> Be Thou to me my Lord, my Guide,
> My Friend, yea everything beside;
> But first, last, best, whate'er betide,
> Be Thou to me my Saviour!

To follow Him as our ideal—that is the work of a lifetime; to trust Him as our Saviour—that may be the work of a moment.

The Deity of Christ

Col. ii. 9.—'For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'

WHAT do we mean by—what reasons are there for believing in—the Divinity of Christ? Let us turn to the New Testament. Where do we find the most careful consideration of the uniquely intimate relation of Jesus Christ to God? In three places. First, in the Epistles of St Paul. Secondly, in the treatise by an unknown writer which we call the Epistle to the Hebrews. And, finally, in that great interpretation of the meaning of the Person and Work of Christ which was written under the influence of St Paul's thought, and is called the Gospel according to St John. This Gospel, which is almost the latest written of New

[1] W. J. Hart.

Testament books, contains the most finished Christian theology to be found in the Bible.

1. God revealed Himself in human form in Jesus of Nazareth. Now, of course, such a sentence is capable of many different shades of meaning. Some affirm that it means 'Jesus was God.' But the Christian Church has never made this unguarded statement. It has always insisted that Jesus was really and truly man. He had a human mind with, consequently, human limitations.

Jesus is not the very image of God in every respect, but He is the very image of God's essential nature. There are certain attributes which we associate with the very idea of God, such attributes as these—omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience. Now Jesus is not to be regarded as the 'very image' of God in these respects. Clearly He was not *omnipresent*. He lived His life in Palestine and other countries saw nothing of Him. He was subject exactly to the same laws that govern us. He could not be in two places at once. When Lazarus fell sick Jesus was away beyond the Jordan, and He had to walk to Bethany before He could bring His sympathy and help to the sorrowing sisters. Nor was He *omnipotent*. It was not simply that His power was limited by moral considerations so that in Nazareth He could do no mighty work because of the people's unbelief. It was because all through He was dependent for power upon His Father. And plainly He was not *omniscient*, since He said Himself 'of that day or that hour knoweth no man, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.' His prayer (Luke xxii. 42), 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me,' would have been a mere mockery if all the future were spread clearly before His eyes. The darkness of that future He could not pierce because, being man, He shared our limitations. The Incarnation means that in Jesus the Divine life was lived under human conditions.

¶ The sunshine is not the sun, but it is the human and terrestrial aspect of the sun; it is that which matters in daily life. It is independent of study and discovery, it is given us by direct experience, and for ordinary life it suffices. Thus would I represent the Christian idea of God. Christ is the human and practical and workaday aspect. Christ is the sunshine, that fraction of transcendental cosmic Deity which suffices for the earth.[1]

2. How can we know that such a fact is true; and if it is true, what is it worth to us? Has it really any significance, any value, for mankind to-day?

In answer to this we must insist on the commonly forgotten fact that spiritual truths must be spiritually discerned. If we wish to understand why men believe in the Incarnation, we must not expect to get an explanation from science or from pure history. In the end, it will be necessary to turn to history, and to the best history that critical scholarship can give. But, at the outset, we must examine the nature of the spiritual intuitions, powers, aspirations, which are still being developed in humanity. We must begin by admitting that we do not know directly what God is like; but implanted in us are aspirations and qualities which tell us what God wishes men to become. From the aspirations which constitute our spiritual endowment we have to form our conception of God's nature. The upward spiritual urge of our being shows the purpose for which man was created. It reveals, more adequately than any other fact of the Universe, the nature of the activity of the Spirit of God. The sciences of physics and biology deal only with the lower preliminary stages of God's work on earth: we cannot therefore hope to find in them a satisfactory revelation of His character. They will disclose the machinery which He has used for His plan, but the ultimate purpose of that plan only comes into view as we examine man and the potentialities Divinely implanted within him. In short, human perfection reveals what God desired when He made man.

Now, when we think of human perfection we instinctively turn to Jesus. When we try to make a picture of what man can be at his best we find that Jesus fills the framework. He has been studied more carefully than any other man. He has been exhaustively and sometimes bitterly criticized. But He remains, for humanity, the ideal Man. So the Christian feels that it is impossible to separate belief in God from belief in Christ. The life which we ought to live is that fashioned by the Spirit of God; and such a life was shown finely in

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge.

Jesus of Nazareth. In Him, as St Paul says, there dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

¶ Henry Ward Beecher put before the Church the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ which to me seems absolutely irrefutable. He did not merely gather texts strewn here and there over the Bible page, and piece them together and say, 'This Book tells me that He was God, and I must believe it because the Book says it.' No; he went back into his own experience, into the experience of the Christian Church. And what did he find? He found there, unmistakably, a great yearning after God, a yearning so deep and persistent that only one thing could be concluded—that God put it there, and put it there as a ground of expectation that He would answer the craving which He had created. And out of that came clearly and necessarily the conclusion that the God who made man thus to need and yearn after Himself must answer him, must come to him, or must cease to be God. Thus it was that, arguing from Christian experience, Beecher learned that it was reasonable and obligatory for the God who made man to come to him, and speak to him, and work for him, and die for him. Then bringing these observations and reasonings to the light of the Scriptural revelation, and looking at the historic Christ from the standpoint of human cravings and needs, Beecher could not escape the conclusion that the Christ portrayed in the Gospels was God's answer to man's necessity. And in grateful surprise he cried, 'Why, this is God! There is not a single thing I would have in God but I find in Christ. There is not a single thing in Christ I would not like to have in God. Why, this is, this must be, God! I worship and I adore.' [1]

To explain the Personality of Jesus satisfactorily we should need a knowledge of God which we do not possess. But the thought of St John contains a point of view to which we continually return. He took the idea of the Logos, by which is meant God's revelation of Himself to the thought and conscience of humanity; and he said that in Jesus the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us. This Logos is both the Light and the Spiritual Life of men. To see it in perfection, in unsullied purity, we must turn to Jesus. Whatever is best in us will draw us to Christ, for there was in Him the Spirit which makes man a son of God. Let us honestly admit that we cannot believe in the Divinity of Christ unless we accept the view of God which Jesus set forth in His teaching and substantiated by His life. Our reflection upon human existence and upon the universe of which it is a part must lead us definitely to this view of God. If we hold that God is merely Power and Order, we will reject Christian belief. If, however, God is our Father, Jesus was uniquely His Son.

The faith which we are concerned to spread throughout the world, the faith by which we need to transform our own lives, is that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' This belief has a profound significance for us all. It implies that we must make Jesus our example—that we must follow Him if we would realize our potentialities. He points the way to the victory over animal instincts and passions; He shows us how to win salvation. The Incarnation is also an assertion that the Divine Life on earth led to the Cross. Suffering is not necessarily a punishment; it may be, and in all probability will be, the inevitable result of service to God, the natural consequence of doing God's will. The life of the Spirit on earth is not a life free from pain. Through struggle and anguish men enter the Kingdom of God. In the Incarnation we see God's self-sacrificing love winning men by evoking love.

3. But there is another aspect of the Incarnation which is too generally overlooked. In much Christian thought there is a belief that this world is hopelessly evil and life here merely a bitter preparation for the future. But if God deigned to dwell on earth, such pessimism is unthinkable; God's presence in Jesus meant that earthly life is in itself worth having; this life is the Father's gift. Our duty is not to decry it, or to seek escape from it, but to use it, to fill it with love, joy, and peace. In fact, we must remember the years which the Lord spent in Galilee before His mission. They were, as His teaching reveals, years rich in simple happiness, profoundly fruitful of spiritual understanding. In those years the human Jesus had His vision of the Kingdom of God and made His life on earth the beginning of life eternal. The same transformation by the Holy Spirit is, in lesser degree, possible for us all. We fulfil our earthly destiny in so far as we are not merely

[1] *Charles A. Berry*, 159.

strengthened by the struggles but also enriched by the joys which earth affords. The world contains both good and evil; but, because it is God's world, there is in it more good than ill. The Incarnation tells us that God does not despair of it, and we can share His confidence.

To approach the problem of the Deity of Christ as a hard intellectual proposition is to lose its significance. The right method of approach is that indicated by the scientific study of human development. We must start with our own religious life, the impulses within us that lead us to search for goodness and truth. We must then, by comparing man as he is now with man as he was ages ago, form an idea of what he is destined to become; and, by this means, we must realize God's purpose, God's nature. Then, in the light of our own religious experience, and of the perfected ideal of which it yields a blurred suggestion, we must turn to Jesus. As we find in Him an unfailing consciousness of God, complete certainty, unswerving loyalty, we shall realize the meaning and accept the fact of His Divinity. He will become the religious centre of our life, the One through whom we know God, in whom we see God.

¶ 'Belief in Christ,' as Hort says, 'is not a supplement to belief in God, but the only sure foundation for it. Belief in God is not a supplement to other beliefs, but the only bond of their coherence and trustworthiness.'

The Complete Life

Col. ii. 10—'Ye are complete in him.'

The truth that is here presented to us is the fullness, the completion of the Christian life. We shall approach this principle by two broad general steps. First, the incompleteness, the one-sidedness of life without religion; and, secondly, Christianity as the complete religion.

1. Whenever we try to picture to ourselves an ideal of life, it is the thought of completeness that rises before our vision at once. The ideal life must of necessity be the complete life. It must not be developed on one side and neglected on another. It must be a whole in which all the faculties play their part. It must not be physically strong and healthy and deficient mentally; nor must it be mentally vigorous and spiritually insensitive. In the ideal of a true man's life place must be made for bodily development. The mind must not be neglected, for thought is the distinctive mark of man. There must be moral training, too, for bodily strength and mental alertness will but lead to disaster if a man is not able to hold his appetites and his passions in check. And with this development of the body, of the mind, and of the will, there must be an inward responsiveness to the wonder and the greatness of life, the mysteries which throw a veil around our human life and suggest deeper purposes and larger meanings than appear on the surface. At the very heart of a man's being there must be a spiritual sensitiveness, out of which are born the higher imaginations of art, the loftier aspirations of religion. Rob human history of this, and how much of its glory would be snatched away!

And between all these faculties there must be a deep harmony. Man is body, mind, soul, spirit. Anything that disturbs the interaction of these faculties must subtract from the completeness of his life. Where the balance is disturbed the nature is narrowed. That is the mischief of so many of our popular ideals of life to-day—they are woefully incomplete, one-sided, specializing in one direction and ignoring the rest. How poor, for example, is the athletic ideal of life which glorifies physical development and leaves the mind fallow; how short-sighted a life the ideal of the student who lives to acquire knowledge but wrecks his physique in the attempt, and cannot impart that knowledge to others; how narrow the life of the saint who neglects the mind and is afraid to embark on the sea of knowledge.

We recall the confession that Charles Darwin made in his Autobiography, how in later life he completely lost his appreciation of Shakespeare. Simply because he had been absorbed through many years in the task of scientific research he had cut off, he had crucified, one side of his nature in the interests of another. Such sacrifice may often seem to be the price of concentration. But it can be good for no man to lose so much as that, and ultimately it cannot be good for the world. The man who has starved one side of his nature in the interests of another may add to the sum of the world's knowledge; he can never be a safe guide for life. The true leader must always be a man of

comprehensive view. That is not only true of the world's leaders; it must be true also of us.

No life can attain to completeness without religion. A man may be physically fit, he may be mentally alert, he may be morally clean, but if he is spiritually insensitive he lacks the greatest gift of all. What do we mean by spiritually sensitive? Responsive to the wonder and the mystery of life, awake to the influences above and beyond the things of time and sense; conscious of God and the vastness of His designs that are being wrought out in our everyday life; meeting the wonder of life with humility, with reverence, and with worship. The man whose soul is not filled with reverence and worship can never enter into the fullness of common and ordinary life. He denies himself the richest happiness, the largest experience of all. The most important fact about us is not the outward life that we are living in the sight and in the knowledge of each other, but that inner life, beneath all others' knowledge, the inner spirit underlying every thought and word and deed. What of that inner life? Is there a spirit within that is sensitive to life's greatness, that is conscious of God's purpose and that loses itself some moment of the day in reverence and in worship? Is that inner spirit alive, awake, responsive? If we have neglected it life is robbed of its glory. If it is living and awake, a new intensity is given to the whole of life. In that inner spirit lies the secret of the complete, the full life.

¶ In the mediæval cities everything was grouped around the cathedral at the centre. That was the centre of all, and under its shadow all the business of the city was transacted. That is the plan of the fullest human life—at the centre wonder, reverence, mystery, worship; and radiating from that centre all the activities and pursuits of human life—commerce, education, art, recreation; at the centre, religion.

In the midst of life's experience with the temptations of life's wear and tear upon us, we are sometimes apt to say that life has robbed us of all our early illusions and that nothing remains now but the hard, unceasing, daily struggle. Are we sure that with what we sometimes call our lost illusions there may not be some neglected realities? Have we made time amidst the business of life to realize the calm and peace at the centre? Have we dwelt in and cultivated the quietness? It makes all the difference whether we have done this or not. The greatest struggle of life, after all, for every one of us, is to keep the spirit young, to be able to get beneath all the common-place and enter again with a new sense of freshness into life. It is only those that in that inner sanctuary wait upon the Lord who renew their strength, who mount up with wings as eagles, who run and are not weary, who walk and do not grow faint.

¶ Madame Schubert, when about to play her husband's music, spent some time first over his letters; she fed her inspiration at that holy flame. So must we. However far afield our work may take us, or however varied may be its form, we must at all costs keep constant touch with the Master Himself. This alone, in Meredith's phrase, will 'keep the passion fresh.'[1]

2. When one speaks of the completion that religion gives to life, some no doubt may think of cases where they have seen religion narrowing life. That there are such cases no man would venture to deny. There are interpretations of religion which would deny any thought or attention to the body and its needs, which would refuse to admit the claims of the mind and regard every effort of the human reason with suspicion. There are jaundiced views which look with dislike and distress upon healthy recreations, frown upon the simple pleasures of life. There are religious views which dehumanize men and women and leave them very unnatural and, truth to say, very unlovely products. And those interpretations of religion have grown up within the borders of Christianity. But have they caught the spirit of Christ? Looking at them, would we, could we, be reminded of Him? As we look back across the centuries, how wonderfully human He was, the Son of man. Did He ever admit that a man should be less than a man when he entered His service? Did He exalt narrowness of spirit and outlook? Did He not, on the contrary, visit it with the most scathing condemnations that ever came from His lips?

Some men have fastened upon that saying of His that 'Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life' as though He said that the life He gave is narrow. The entrance is narrow, through the

[1] John Hall, *Workaday Ethics*, 75.

gates of unconditional surrender, but the life is broad as it is deep. 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' Is that the impoverishment of life? Is not that word of the poet's true that men in the course of the centuries have 'made His love'—yes, and His purpose—'too narrow, by false limits of their own'? True, Christ demands rigorous discipline and self-control. But what is the end and aim of the demand? That a man may possess his life and use all his faculties and not be driven by them. But the religion of Christ is the broadest spirit in the world. It includes and consecrates every exercise of the faculties. It allows the mind the freest scope. The fact that Christianity is split into many sects, while it is lamentable enough on account of the rise of bitterness of spirit, is really the greatest testimony to the breadth of the Christian religion; men may see it from so many different standpoints and yet find their own needs satisfied by the one Master. The truly Catholic Church is not one of these sects; it must include and embrace them all. The religion of Christ is deep as it is broad, down to the uttermost needs of the human soul. It is the religion that guides and inspires the saint as well as the religion that lifts the sinner from the depths.

¶ It was said of Phillips Brooks that he seldom preached a sermon without using in it the word 'richness,' and it was certainly a word most characteristic of him. Life to that great prophet was ineffably rich, and to realize and share the richness of experience, to accept the rich privilege of life with a chaste body, an alert mind, a sensitive imagination, and a steady will—that was but to repeat the great promise of this passage, 'Ye are complete in him.'

¶ I have never yet in all my life found a single spiritual need that I could not find redressed and filled in Christ. I don't wonder that Hugh Price Hughes said to his wife, 'Put on my gravestone, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want."'[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett.

Crossed Out

Col. ii. 14.—'Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross' (R.V.).

The word rendered 'handwriting' in our Authorized Version is a technical word in the Greek papyri. It means the memorial of a debt, or what we should now call a note of hand. It generally takes the form of a letter acknowledging the indebtedness, and one usual formula is the phrase, 'I will repay.' These words are found several times in our New Testament in the same connection of debt and formal acknowledgment of liability. In the Parable of the Two Debtors they occur twice. Each debtor said, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay all.' So St Paul, sending back the runaway Onesimus, gave Philemon a half-playful IOU for the slave's debts. 'If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it.' It is precisely the same thought as in the papyri, and here in the letter to Colossæ, written probably by the same post, is the same notion of spiritual debt and how to meet it. A bond in our own handwriting, but Someone else assumes liability.

1. We sometimes forget that sin is a self-incurred liability. There are some kinds of sin which are involuntary, but most of it is self-incurred. The Law of God (whether we mean by the words the Mosaic Code, which every Israelite was bound to obey, or use them in the wider sense of that general moral law to which the universal conscience of the world makes response) is a Mount Sinai which we find ourselves unable to scale. We have undertaken to climb the peak, and failed. Therein is the bitterness of the position which St Paul contemplates.

The Apostle notes two facts about the Law. It is 'against us by its ordinances.' That is another way of saying we are against it. It goes against the grain. Its validity is beyond question. But we find its ordinances 'dogmatic,' to quote the Greek word here. The restraint of them is irksome, and we sometimes find our pleasure in breaking them. But that brings us to another aspect of the question.

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The Law not only checks, it attacks us. It is 'contrary to us.' by the very fact of its broken majesty. We find it in active hostility against us; and, as Dr Maclaren says, the man who has broken the Law of God finds that Law standing in his way as Balaam found the angel with a drawn sword. The Law of God is not only collector of its own dues, it is also prosecutor for its unfulfilled liabilities. Do you recollect the scene in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Faithful describes to Christian the attempt he made to climb the Hill of Difficulty; how at one time he yearned to turn aside after the old Adam, how ultimately a man met him and smote him again and again to the ground, and when Faithful pleaded for mercy, the response of his opponent was this, 'I know not how to shew mercy.' And Christian, having heard the story, says to Faithful, 'That man is Moses.' Viewing it purely and simply from the point of law, that picture is true. For the Mosaic Law, and for any law, it is impossible to show mercy and at the same time retain justice. And yet this very instinct of justice impels the earnest man to dream, even in his dull despair, of the time when he will be able to repay his debt and regain his bond, and see it cancelled and receipted before him.

¶ When Dickens says of the crowd in the Marshalsea Prison that they have 'come to regard insolvency as the normal state of mankind,' he qualifies it by reminding us, on the other hand, of the brave optimism which made many of them persistently hope against hope for the day of release.

2. We find in the papyri an interesting illustration of the thought which was probably working in St Paul's mind here. A frequent method of cancelling a bond was by drawing two diagonal lines across the document in the form of the letter X. Numbers of these cancelled papyri have been recovered thus marked. One of them records the verdict of a judge, who says, 'Let the handwriting be crossed out.' Now the letter was the Greek initial of the name of Christ, and St Paul's fertile mind leaped at the coincidence. But the form was also that of one kind of cross—the *crux decussata* (which we term St Andrew's Cross). Here, then, was a double parallel ready to hand, Christ and a cross, and a cancelled bond bearing the mark which commences Christ's name, and resembles His cross. So St Paul seizes it as an illustration of the process by which their spiritual solvency had been secured to the Colossians. Christ has drawn His cross from corner to corner of the bond of our sin, the note of hand of our spiritual liability, and in that cancelling we, too, find our avenue of freedom, our discharge from further liability.

¶ There is an incident recorded in the life of Martin Luther of how he was visited in his visions at night by Satan, who brought to him great rolls which he bade him read. Luther saw in his dream that these contained the record of his own life, and that they were written with his own hand. And said the Tempter to him: 'Is that true, did you write it?' And the poor stricken monk had to confess it was all true. Scroll after scroll was unrolled, and the same confession was perforce wrung from him. At length the Evil One prepared to take his departure, having brought the monk down to the lowest depths of abject misery. And then there came upon him in his vision, like a flash, that upon which his whole soul was saved. He turned to the Tempter and said: 'It is true, every word of it, but write across it all: "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."'

3. St Paul further says that Jesus Christ nailed the bond like a living foe to His cross. And when he says 'nailed to the cross' he is not merely speaking of the accusation or 'title' commonly nailed above the head of the criminal, such as Pilate wrote, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' He is using a more vivid simile. He speaks of the Law as an accuser personified, and sees it actually nailed to the cross, as Christ Himself was nailed. In regard to its hostile grasp on us, St Paul says that just as Christ died, and they certified Him to be dead, so our enemy also is dead, crucified when Jesus was crucified. We need never dread its arresting grip again, if we are in Him.

Lord, pay the debts I owe:
  They weigh upon my heart,
They rise where'er I go,
  In Church and home and mart:
Alike in feast and fare and fast
I struggle to forget the past.[1]

[1] G. Matheson, 'Penitence' (*Sacred Songs*).

¶ As in most of the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe the cross is the central notion of the architect's ground-plan, so in men's spiritual life God has a vision of a great and glorious edifice, but the groundwork of it is in the form of a cross.[1]

4. Now, having seen the vision of heavenly bounty, surely we shall instinctively turn to another side of the question, and remember what devotion Jesus Christ has the right to expect in return for all these gifts which He has given to us. As Dr John Mott has said: 'It is an exceeding belittling of the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross if it does not impel us to cast ourselves and all we have quickly at His feet, rather than simply moving us to reluctant and abridged and calculating gifts.'

He gave me back the bond,
  It was a heavy debt,
And as He gave He smiled and said,
  Thou wilt not Me forget.[2]

So let us take our freedom, so let us use our wealth, that the world may know that Christ has cancelled our 'overweights of debt,' and the Master Himself may know that for us the hours of Calvary were not in vain.

God's Method in the Cross

Col. ii. 14, 15.—'Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having put off from himself the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it' (R.V.).

Why is the procession of the Cross a triumph? Why is the Via Dolorosa the Via Sacra? Why is Calvary without the Walls the Capitol of the Celestial City? The answer is simple. The Cross is a complete and final vindication of God?

1. *The Triumph of the Method of Personality.*—Do we ever consider how small was the apparatus necessary for the staging of God's transcendent act? Two beams, a long and a short, laid one across the other, a handful of nails with a hammer; and a naked body. That is all. There is no background, no tableau. They are not needed. 'So God loved the world.'

When Jesus was in the way going up to Jerusalem on that last eventful journey, there came one running to Him with the eager question, 'What good thing shall I do?' He was a man who understood to the full the responsibilities of wealth, position, and opportunity. He was thirsting for eternal life; for the highest, the best, the self-denying life. And Jesus loved him. Why should such a man have been subjected to so cruel, so unnecessary a test as Christ proposed? Why should he have become the type of a soul that has made the great refusal? What is it that he cannot face? What is it on which he turns his back? Not the simple life, or the strenuous life, or the life of service. It is these that have been drawing him to that momentous interview with the Master. The sight on which he cannot look is Calvary. He could not serve God, because he refused to know God. He would make a splendid use of his opportunities, but he would not be so futile as to surrender them. He would willingly have financed the Galilean ministry. He would not fall in behind the Saviour and follow Him to the Cross.

We cannot know God until we cease to think of Him as a millionaire. He is not the universal Purveyor, but our Father. The method by which He seeks us is that not of providence but of personality. This method He vindicates victoriously on the Cross. What a splendid lesson the Crucifixion affords of the value and meaning of personality! No adventitious circumstances are needed to draw the world to Him who hangs on the tree. The multitude had sought Him because they did eat of the loaves. And even Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him when He turned His back on Galilee. If He had neither silver nor gold, He had evinced powers of becoming the Benefactor of the human race, which the possessor of all the wealth of the Roman Empire might have envied. Would we have been wiser than the twelve disciples and not attempted to turn Him from a course that must bring to a sudden and abrupt close a career the influence of which was already unparalleled? Powers so wonderful are too precious to waste. It would indeed be a crime against society if the Son of Man were suffered to give Himself over to scourging, and to death. Martyrdom is always attractive. If Jesus Christ had been exposed to the risk of public execution in the normal course of witness-

[1] T. H. Darlow, *The Print of the Nails*, 12.
[2] Sabine.

ing for truth or freedom or righteousness, the nobler spirits among His followers would not have sought to withhold the crown. What they were unable to trust was the mighty power of His personality. What they failed to foresee was that a rich activity was a hindrance to a mission that was universal. The shameful situation of a servile criminal, the renunciation of every avenue of influence that men call opportunity, were the conditions of that power to touch and to fascinate all ages with the matchless glory of His naked personality which the Saviour of the World felt within Himself when He cried, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.'

¶ A modern writer [1] pictures the Young Ruler as he meditates upon Calvary :

It seemed so mad a way to do—
To grieve so deep ; to perish, too,
For men He never even knew !
A life so lonely, meek, and bare !
I wonder why He made a prayer
For them that mocked and nailed Him there.

Vast wealth is mine ; why do I see
My golden store without avail ?
Why turns no man with love to me ?
Why did He triumph and I fail ?

Oh, 'tis a grievous mystery
That mankind never looks to me
As to that spent and broken Christ
That droops on Calvary !

2. *The Triumph of the Method of Poverty.*—Once again the Cross vindicates God, because in it we see the triumph of the method of poverty. 'For our sakes he became poor.' In the eyes of the world that is a paradox, because the only way of salvation which it understands is the employment of wealth for the good of others. This is what is popularly called the stewardship of riches. And yet in the deepest sense of the word there is no real gift, if I share with another the material resources of our common mother earth which I happen to command. But if his fullness means my want, and if I go hungry that he may be satisfied, then it is myself I give. It still remains true that nothing moves the gratitude of men but the endurance on their behalf of labour and sorrow, of toil and tears. It was an afflicted and poor people that God chose to be His ministers of grace. 'Behold and see, if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow,' are the words which the Bible uses of Jerusalem. 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ?' God is no more in the pocket of the large fortunes than He is on the side of the big battalions. And if God has still a work to do for the nations through the land which our hearts love, who knows but it may be accomplished out of the dust ?

For the crown which God Himself wears is woven of thorns. It is through His poverty that He makes many rich. Calvary is God's Hill. It is impossible to mistake the method whereby He wins salvation. For if in the beginning of the world His joyful work was welcomed by the singing of the morning stars, it is the lifting up of His own pierced hands which, as the shadows of its history deepen, become God's evening sacrifice. And still there is joy in the presence of the angels.

3. *The Triumph of the Method of Pardon.*—The fullest and final vindication of God given in the Cross is the crowning mercy, of which it is the pledge. God has identified Himself, not only with our sufferings, but with our sins. It is the triumph of the method of Pardon.

There is a hopelessness about sin which is wholly incomparable with the effect of any other disability to which flesh is heir. Results may be mitigated by sympathy and co-operation but the burden of responsibility cannot be shared. What a man has done by his own spontaneous act, that he has done, and there is an end of the matter. For when every allowance has been made for extenuating circumstances, for ignorance, for carelessness, for infirmity, the balance of guilt, whatever it may be, lies heavy upon the conscience. And the central significance of the Cross, as its saving power has been proclaimed by generations of believing men, is this : God takes up sin and makes it His own from the very moment that the dread possibility has been translated into a damning fact. That is what Paul means when he expresses his own experience in the tremendous words : 'Him who knew no sin, he made to be sin on our behalf ; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.' This is what Peter means when he declares that Christ 'bore

[1] Laura Simmons, in *The British Weekly*, April 30, 1925.

our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness.' This is the force of John's language, as he contemplates 'the broken vow, the frequent fall' which hide the light of God's countenance even from them who would fain serve Him best. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation.' There is no mistaking this language or the experience which it expresses. God not only becomes poor, but He takes the place of the sinner. What we call the guilty conscience, that He can make His own, so that those who through fear of death have all their life long been subject to bondage, have no more conscience of sin. With a marvellous reiteration the writers of the New Testament, each from the standpoint of his own personality, confirm this essential Christian experience. This is what the Cross meant to them. This is the place which Calvary held in their own lives.

'Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,' so the old prophet described, in words that burn, the spotless Lamb, the Man of Sorrows, the faithful Servant of His redeeming purpose on whom God would lay the sins of His people. And when a Paul or a John or a Peter came to interpret Him, in whom he had believed, to the men of his own age and through them to each succeeding generation; when he remembered that it was Jesus who had buried his Past and illuminated his Future; when he recalled the assurance of pardon, the peace of reconciliation, the inspiration of the Spirit, that had flowed into his ransomed life from Jesus, and from Jesus only; what could he do but gaze upon that thorn-crowned Head and cry, 'By his stripes we are healed'?

Who else had dared for thee what I have
dared?
I plunged the depth most deep from bliss
above;
I not My flesh, I not My spirit spared;
Give thou Me love for love.

. . . . .

Thee did nails grave upon My hands, thy name
Did thorns for frontlets stamp between Mine
eyes:
I, Holy One, put on thy guilt and shame;
I, God, Priest, Sacrifice.

A thief upon My right hand and My left;
Six hours alone, athirst, in misery:
At length in death one smote My heart and cleft
A hiding-place for thee.

Nailed to the racking cross, than bed of down
More dear, whereon to stretch Myself and
sleep:
So did I win a kingdom—Share My crown;
A harvest,—Come and reap.[1]

The Triumph of the Cross

Col. ii. 15.—'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'

THERE are words that travel from age to age and from language to language, gathering romance round them as they go. One of these is the word 'triumph,' which has come to us with but little change from the Greek *thriambos* through the Latin *triumphus*. At its Greek stage the word meant a hymn of praise to Dionysus. Dionysus was the wine god, the god of intoxication and of inspiration, who banished care and brought delight to the hearts of men. The Dionysian hymn was associated with all that was most free and glad in the life of ancient Greece, communion with Nature, festivals among the mountains, youth and beauty crowned with flowers.

¶ One may quote in illustration Professor G. Murray's exquisite translation of one of the choruses of the *Bacchæ* ('Some Maidens')—

Will they ever come to me, ever again,
The long, long dances,
On through the dark till the dim stars wane?
Shall I feel the dew on my throat, and the stream
Of wind in my hair? Shall our white feet gleam
In the dim expanses?

. . . . . .

O wildly labouring, fiercely fleet,
Onward yet by river and glen. . . .
Is it joy or terror, ye storm-swift feet? . . .
To the dear lone lands untroubled of men,
Where no voice sounds, and amid the shadowy
green
The little things of the woodland live unseen.

Under the shadow of the Roman temperament the word took to itself a sterner note.

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

Yet it was still a note of joy. It was a word that now belonged not to Dionysus, the god of wine, but to Mars, the god of war, and it came to be set apart for a special use—for the public honour that was given to a conqueror after his victory. The streets were adorned with garlands and the temples opened. The procession was headed by the great officials of the State and the Senate, followed in order by the trumpeters, the captured spoils and trophies of the fight, the white sacrificial bulls, the prisoners spared to grace the triumph prior to imprisonment or execution, the musicians, and finally the general himself. '*Io triumphe*,' shouted the spectators, as the splendid pageant moved slowly up the Forum to the temple of Capitoline Jupiter.

¶ Not very long ago Rome was reminding herself of some of her ancient triumphs when she gave a tumultuous welcome to Mussolini, the dictator of Italy, after an electoral victory. The *Times* correspondent said: 'The military element was supreme and gave a touch of discipline and order to the roaring multitudes, so that there were lacking only the prisoners, the plunder, and the victorious general for the real triumph to be reconstructed, and the victor was found when the crowd reached the Piazza Colonna and flooded round the Palazzo Chigi.'

1. The originality and daring of St Paul startle us again and again, unless we read him with eyes that are blinded by sheer familiarity. But surely his daring was never greater than when he depicts the Saviour as celebrating His triumph on His Cross. Triumph—that word of exultation! The Cross—that tree of shame! The thoughts of Christendom turn often to the Via Dolorosa and imaginatively reconstruct the tremendous scene when Pilate had given sentence that it should be as the Jews required, and Jesus, bearing His Cross, went forth to Calvary. It is easy for us to sing now, with the faith of the ages to teach us,

> The royal banners forward go,
> The Cross shines forth in mystic glow,

but in that hour of darkness the Cross looked like anything but a royal banner, and it had no mystic glow at all to any watching eye. It was but the instrument of death. It was but the token of shame. It was an instrument of torture so terrible that the daughters of Jerusalem had good reason for their weeping. It was a badge of disgrace so infamous that a civilization skilled in the ingenuity of vengeance could devise none darker or deeper. In this Jerusalem street we are at the opposite pole of religious experience from the merry dances among the hills of Greece. We are at the opposite side of the world's social system from the conqueror's pageant winding through scenes of splendour. Yet by a miracle of God these words were written but a few short years after, *He triumphed in the Cross*. So as often as we take our stand in the Via Dolorosa, the swaying Cross is caught by the rays of the rising sun, and is transformed and beautified. The mocking crowd is swept away as by some irresistible wind of God, and a new multitude comes pouring in with songs of love and joy, to be the captives of the Crucified, the subjects of the Christ, till time shall be no more.

2. To exhaust the meaning of this would be to analyse the whole of the teaching of the New Testament concerning the death of our Lord, and different aspects of this great reality flash upon us from almost every page. When Nelson, after the Battle of the Nile, landed at Naples he was hailed as the saviour of Italy, and received a welcome almost equal to a Roman triumph in the days of old. The King of Naples came out to meet him on the royal barge. The crowd in the streets hailed him as deliverer and preserver, and, so Southey records, 'the lazzaroni displayed their joy by holding up birds in cages and giving them their liberty as he passed.' So, in this passage and in many another part of the New Testament, whole companies of singing birds are released, many voices blended in one song of deliverance. Now it is the forgiveness of sins. Again it is the quickening of new life. Once more it is the lifting of the curse. Yet again it is the defeat of principalities and powers. All these things go together to make this stupendous triumph, the victory that rose out of defeat, the glory that burst from the darkness.

3. Yet the fullness of the meaning is realized only as our adoring thought travels on from the hour and power of darkness to the morning when the bars of iron were broken and captivity

was taken captive. Central as the Cross is in New Testament thought, it never stands alone. It was the dark entrance gate to the victory of the Resurrection. It was the falling into the ground and dying of the seed which was to grow into a renewed humanity quickened together with Christ. Thus the triumph of the Cross moves its pageant onwards into the unending vistas of Christian experience.

¶ Lewis Bayly's *Practice of Pietie* is a book forgotten now, but in its time very famous. It was one of the two books which John Bunyan's wife brought to him for her wedding dowry. Near the end there is a colloquy between Christ and the Soul in which Christ opens to the Soul the meaning of His Cross.

'*Soule.* Lord, why wouldest Thou be taken, when Thou mightest have escaped Thine enemies?

Christ. That thy spiritual enemies should not take thee, and cast thee into the prison of utter darkness.

Soule. Lord, wherefore wouldest Thou be bound?

Christ. That I might loose the cordes of thine iniquities.

Soule. Lord, wherefore wouldest Thou be lift up upon a Crosse?

Christ. That I might lift thee up with Me to heaven.

Soule. Lord, wherefore were Thy hands and feet nayled to the Crosse?

Christ. To enlarge thy hands to doe the works of righteousness and to set thy feete at libertie, to walke in the wayes of peace.

Soule. Lord, why wouldest Thou have Thine armes nayled abroad?

Christ. That I might embrace thee more lovingly, My sweet soule.

Soule. Lord, wherefore was Thy side opened with a speare?

Christ. That thou mightest have a way to come nearer to My heart.'

We see, in the experience of the people of Christ, the triumph of the Cross before our very eyes. The thing is justified by its fruits. It may be ugly and hateful as a malefactor's gibbet, but what shall we say if the tree of shame blossoms into the tree of life with leaves for the healing of the nations?

The Heart of Christianity

Col. iii. 1.—'If ye then be risen with Christ.'

1. The heart of Christianity, its innermost sanctuary, and the chief source of its power is not even the Cross. It is the open grave.

The Cross, indeed, must always be a very central thing. Whenever we wander far from Calvary we begin to lose sight of the Master, and have to get back. And yet is there not real point in Michelangelo's indignant protest, when he turned in his stormy way upon his fellow-painters, and demanded, 'Why do you keep filling gallery after gallery with endless pictures of the one over-reiterated theme, of Christ in weakness, Christ upon the Cross, Christ dying, most of all Christ hanging dead? Why do you concentrate upon that passing episode, as if that were the last word and the final scene, as if the curtain dropped upon that horror of disaster and defeat? At worst all that lasted for only a few hours. But to the end of unending eternity Christ is alive, Christ rules and reigns and triumphs.' And, if we would help people to be valiant in their Christian living, that is what we should be ringing out over the world: that Christ has won, that evil is toppling, that the end is sure, that nothing can for long resist our mighty and victorious Lord.

It was Easter that made the Church. And it is Easter alone that can bring us through with our heads up and our hearts gallantly defiant. For it comes to us as a call to a higher life, aye, and, thank God, as a proof that we can win to it. Always what interests the men of the New Testament in Christ's rising is that they can reproduce it in their own experience. To them His life is not in any way unique, save in degree. For they who are Christ's are bound to follow Christ on to the very end. They, too, must go about doing good, in their Lord's way; they, too, must take their cross upon their shoulder and throw their life away for others, in His fashion; they, too, must rise with Christ into a new and wonderful being, grow altogether different from what they were; must—and can—become new creatures with new possibilities, new ways, new power.

2. 'If ye then be risen with Christ,' Paul throws out, taking for granted that amazing assumption. To his mind that is the whole

point and meaning of the thing. If you are Christ's at all, then of course you have left behind you the old life as a thing dead, and over, and forgotten, and are now living in His new and glorious way—are, or else can.

When the people of the Testament tell us that none of us need limp on in the old lame way for one day further, that there is no sin to which we must go down, no habit that we cannot shatter, no victory we cannot win, they are bringing us news proved and authenticated beyond questioning in their own lives. And therefore for us to continue as we are is now a dreadful thing. For, in view of what Christ offers us, and what they have experienced, there is no longer any necessity for it. That which we are we need no longer be; and if we remain only that, it is henceforward only through our own deliberate choice.

¶ They tell us ants are born with wings and use them, know the glory and flame and rapture of flight, and that they tear them off deliberately and live their whole lives through as crawling insects—choosing that, they to whom God gave the whole vast empire of the air.[1]

With incredulous eyes Paul sees that the great mass of people are in no way interested in the news he brings to them.

Bound who should conquer, slaves who should
be kings,—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things.

Think of a slave who might be done for ever with that misery of his—that shrinking figure, those cowed and furtive eyes, that timorous elbow thrown up all too quickly, ever ready for the expected blow—who might win back self-respect, and be a man again instead of that mere ugly thing he is. And he, given his choice of that, elects this horror instead of liberty.

¶ Mr Aldous Huxley stood watching an Indian peasant gloatingly seizing upon an unspeakably sordid chance that came his way—his hands and heart all eagerly given to that grossness. How singular a work, he mused, for a cousin of the angels, for a full brother of Raphael and the Lord Buddha and Beethoven! And we, who might be like Christ, choose this we are!

Couldst thou in vision see
Thyself the man God meant,
Thou never more couldst be
The man thou art, content.

3. It is a desperate thing to meet with Christ. For once we do, we must close with Him or reject Him; must take His offered gifts or else push them impatiently aside; must be the better for Him or the worse. We can become like Christ! Given that message, does our heart thrill at the thought of it, and do our hands leap out to clutch it, and do we resolve that, whatever else we win or lose, this we are going to gain? Or do we say, My ways are fixed; my character is formed; the channels are long cut in which my life must run on to the end; my feet turn of themselves now into worn and beaten paths.

I am not what I have, nor what I do,
But what I was I am, I am even I.

And it is too late to change.

But we can. That is the fact that we have got to grasp. It does not matter how old we are. 'Ask him,' his parents said; 'he is of age, and he was always blind, was born so and has never seen.' Yet he was healed. 'It must be nearly forty years,' the people told each other, 'since as a boy I first saw that cripple carried up the temple steps to the stance he made his own so long. And he is cured.' Think of Zacchæus or of Matthew, or of Mary Magdalene. It may take time. 'I learned,' says Plutarch doggedly, 'that anger is not incurable if one wants to cure it.' It may mean endless pains! And who would grudge them for so wonderful a prize? Do you remember that old Buddhist who turned on his masterful passions, and hurled his truculent defiance in their faces. 'Although you conquer me a million times, I will spring up again a million and one times,' he cried; 'will never, never yield!'

And it might happen far more swiftly than we think. 'Thanks be to God,' cries Paul, 'who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' There evidently is a man who feels that he is winning, who knows it indeed. He has his dreams. But they are not mere thin and insubstantial things, far off, and never drawing any nearer. They keep coming true. This is a man, fit for his life and able for his task. It is a happy condition. For there is no

[1] A. J. Gossip, *From the Edge of the Crowd*, 77.

more miserable object than a man pitchforked into a job too big for him, and conscious of his own incompetence; a man who never keeps step with duty, but is always lagging farther and farther in the rear, while a huge mass of work undone keeps heaping itself up into a threatening avalanche which, when it moves, must overwhelm him in an irretrievable disaster.

But isn't that a too vivid picture of the lives of some of us? Give us time, we say. We hope something will come of it all some day. That is the curse of religion, answers Dora Greenwell, that habit of translating into a vague future tense what Christ offers us now. We can do nothing in the meantime, reported the panic-stricken spies; it were folly to try. It will take generations before, trained into a military people, we can face these giants, or hope to storm these huge walled towns! 'We are well able to go up against them now,' urged the bold minority. But nobody would listen, and whole forty years were lost quite needlessly! And we, too, throw away so much because we don't believe the promises, don't credit even He can do much for us—yet.

¶ Do you remember how, year in year out, the Bastille, that grim symbol of the tyranny beneath which an unhappy people groaned, frowned down upon their misery—huge, threatening, impregnable. And they, poor souls, could do nothing but glare up impotently at it, cursing beneath their breath—till one day, driven beyond endurance, they swarmed out in sheer madness to what seemed an obviously hopeless attack. And they found it furnished with one day's provisions and no more, garrisoned by only thirty troopers and some eighty tottering veterans, led by an indeterminate and futile mind; and in four little hours the utterly impossible was done, and the Bastille was down!

4. But how are we to reach it and begin this newness of life?

There is no way to Easter but by Calvary. What we require is something that will push us into action, that will make us really choose what we know we should choose. That is the reason of the Sacrament and the use of the Cross. Before we finally determine what we are going to do with life we must be sure that we have all the facts before us. And this is one of them, this Cross. Does it not prove that, in the same world as God, colossal failure is not failure, but a door that opens straight out into triumph for a loyal heart? Keep looking! For it will help you, lay compulsion on you, till your hands leap out to take the cup and all it typifies. The Sacrament! The recruit's oath of allegiance! The vow that the young soldier swore before the battalion he was joining, that all he had, his life itself, was not his any longer, but the Emperor's, and that he would be true to him till death!

Yet stay! Are you quite certain that you understand? That recruit's oath took him into strange places—many a lonely vigil, many a breathless jeopardy; meant weariness and wounds and perhaps a life tossed away with disdain rather than break or yield. 'Dare you drink of the cup that I shall drink of?' asks the Master. Look into its depths again! There are grace and forgiveness there. Yes, but far more! There are self-sacrifice, and loyalty, and a determination that you, too, are going to live in this new way. And dare you? Do you answer, looking straight into Christ's eyes, 'I can, I will, I do; and, please God, I shall stand to it'?

Why, then, the grub is changing to the butterfly; and Christ's power is at work in you, making you like Himself; and the poor shuffling thing you are is putting on His ways. For you Easter has really dawned: in you the new life has indeed begun.

The Life Immortal

Col. iii. 1.—'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.'

In thinking of immortality, we are too much inclined to put the first emphasis on length instead of on quality. We seek the assurance that life will be projected on a line that runs into the far future instead of seeking now the higher levels of life, where the assurance of immortality will come unsought. Men ask very wistfully if there be another life at the far end of this life; and then Life turns to the questioner and asks him to live now the life immortal, and offers him the priceless reality as a present attainment.

Jesus' conception of immortality was a qualitative thing. He did not look upon it merely in terms of duration, the never-ending extension of life, but He saw it primarily as a

quality. And its quality depended upon character and relationships. 'This is eternal life, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' That is an immortality which does not begin with death, but with faith. And the moment we begin to live with God as our centre, God mirrored and understood in Christ; when we have begun to find the power and the joy and the sense of a kind of infinite capacity within us which that faith brings, then we shall feel that we have discovered a sort of life which is the only life that is worth perpetuating forever.

1. It is profoundly true, as Phillips Brooks says, that 'we are haunted by an ideal life. It is in our blood and never will be still.' This material world of ours does not offer an understanding of our own being, nor of our life. We may be very diligent in acquiring possessions, and still go through life unsatisfied. The material world does not account for the powers we possess: the powers of body and mind and spirit. It cannot account for our aspirations or our highest impulses. It cannot explain even those simple relationships of daily life, our friendships and our affections—those relationships which make our home and our neighbourhood. In the midst of the commonplaces of daily life we become aware that we have standards of moral value which transcend the commonplace. Why should a man sometimes 'lay down his life for his friend'? Why does a mother sometimes sacrifice herself for her children? Here are eternal values in the midst of our temporal life. Here are immortal impulses in the midst of the things which 'perish with the using.' Continually we are being startled by the Infinite; and every moment of such insight teaches us that the world we are living in is not essentially a physical world, and that this higher life is not temporal but eternal.

We seek to know our world; but only a limited part of the world we live in consents to register itself on our physical sense-organs. 'The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.' To know our world we must test the eternal and unseen realities; and this test is made by our living. If we wait for knowledge before making the great adventure of living the life immortal, we shall miss that adventure. If we think it is to be deferred until we come to another world, we shall fail to understand this present world. Immortality stands before us with its supreme challenge, saying, 'If ye then *be risen* with Christ, seek those things which *are above*.'

¶ The best motto is not an inscription for your tombstone: '*Resurgam*, I shall arise, when earthly life is over, when the graves unclose.' It is a watchword for your hearts: '*Resurgo*, I arise, I am delivered, I am quickened, I begin to live upward, through Christ, for Christ, unto Christ.'[1]

2. In the search for the assurance of immortality, men have often sought afar that which can be discovered near at hand. They seek evidence of another world which shall take the place of this world, and of an endless life to open at the far end of the earthly life. They repeat, through the long generations, the ancient question, 'If a man die, shall he live again?' Thus they assume the reality of death, and postpone immortality to a shadowy future. How much there is, of human belief, which uses, as its foundation, the assumption that our immortal spirits are dependent on our mortal bodies! St Paul pointed out the folly of that assumption, and reversed the emphasis. The spirit builds the body, and it shall build anew according to its needs. When a sower goes forth to sow his grain, he does not expect to recover from the ground the seed he has scattered. Rather does he go forth in the time of harvest to gather that which the miracle of life has created anew. He forgets the seed which was dissolved in the ground and rejoices in the grain which has grown in the light of heaven.

The greatest proof of the immortality of the Spirit of Christ is the power with which it operated in the time that followed that first Easter. Years after the Apostle John, who travelled far and wide among the disciples of the risen Christ, observed the moral and spiritual power which was associated with their central faith, the faith in immortality. He said, 'Every man that hath this hope in him *purifieth* himself.' Human lives were lifted to new levels. Conscious that they were already living the immortal life, these men sought 'those things which are above.' Moral uplift and spiritual

[1] H. van Dyke, *The Open Door*, 39.

power were the consequences of that greatest faith that the human mind can hold, the faith that life may attain immortal quality and thereby be assured of endless duration. It is not the *logic* but the *dynamic* of the faith that most surely carries conviction. When the messengers of Christ go out to win men to this faith they may go equipped with argument; but better is it to carry to men the challenge, 'Are you living, here and now, the life that deserves to last forever?' Strange it is how the fear of death vanishes when men assert greatly the power of life! When life is lifted to the higher moral and spiritual levels, the conviction of immortality is not difficult to attain.

¶ Having now myself got into the eighth decade of life, I feel that birthdays acquire increasingly a new significance. A sentence I culled from Dr M'Leod Campbell's life some years ago often recurs to me as at least what ought to be one's feeling as the shadows of evening lengthen out. 'I bless God that to me old Age's waking consciousness is infinitely sweeter than the brightest dreams of early days,' and again, 'I long ago learned no longer to live in time apart from eternity—taught to live the eternal life now in time.'[1]

This is, indeed, an ancient discovery, but it is also very modern. It means having Christ as a living Presence. It means making His will the guide and inspiration of daily living. It means entering into a close and vital comradeship with Him. Such a discovery is always new for it never can grow old. But it means that life is illuminated with a sudden glory and the world is lighted with a glowing radiance. To the newly opened eyes of the spirit, the unseen world becomes visible. To live for the immortal realities means that we are already immortal. This discovery of the Divine Presence does not come by searching afar. 'The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.' Yet because God is so vast men have sometimes thought that He could be found only afar; just as they think of the immortal life as hidden in another world.

¶ St Augustine says, 'Thither one journeyeth not in ships, nor in chariots, nor on foot; for to journey thither, nay, even to arrive there, is nothing else but to will to go.'

[1] *Arnold Foster*, 158.

I break my pilgrim staff,—I lay
  Aside the toiling oar;
The angel sought so far away
  I welcome at my door.

. . . . .

And all the jarring notes of life
  Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
  Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
  And so the west winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
  I open to the day.[1]

The Upward Aim

Col. iii. 1, 2.—'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.'

The teaching of the Bible with regard to the Resurrection is twofold. First as it concerns our Lord Himself, and then as it concerns all believers in Him. In the former light it is a truth to be believed by us, and in the latter an experience which we are to share. It is well, therefore, with our reverent remembrance of the supreme fact that He who 'died for our sins' was also 'raised again for our justification,' that we should not forget the present personal significance of the crowning miracle of Christ's resurrection. Identified with our Lord, and made one with Him in His death and burial, we are to be like Him also in resurrection beauty and power, for 'like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life.'

1. The real aim of the Christian is an upward one. 'Things that are above' are of supreme consequence to him, and the setting of his affection on them determines the fashion of his whole life among men. His spiritual conceptions and aspirations are expressed in the ordinary activities of his life before others, and he makes all its necessary duties but stepping-stones to the realization of the higher realities. Indeed, the direction of all our external doings is in the nature of things determined and controlled by the power of our inner life. Hence to

[1] Whittier.

realize that we are 'risen with Christ' lends to all life a sanctifying force which manifests itself in every sphere and realm.

To be 'risen with Christ' is to possess a new viewpoint, and hence to judge things by altered standards of value. The man who has entered into the mystery of Calvary, and the triumph of Christ over sin and death, has learned to estimate the 'things that are seen' at their true worth, and knows them to be but temporal. His seeking of 'the things that are above' is consequently as much a reasoned conclusion regarding their supreme value as it is an inward impulse. He is content to lose the world in whatever measure such loss may be necessary, just because he has gained that which externally satisfies. But such a man does not really lose anything of the world which is worth possessing, for it is by thus being subordinated to the loftiest control that all life's necessary aims—social, commercial, or political—are ennobled and delivered from sordidness. Too often, as we know, these things become the causes of spiritual and moral declension. It is not, however, that in themselves they are wrong, but just because their compelling force is not controlled and overborne by a strenuous seeking of the things that are above. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.' Make all your correspondences with the world opportunities for seeking His glory, and you are thus translating the fact of the Resurrection into the force of true living, and at the same time are being delivered from the things which ensnare so many. The Christian who has entered into this secret is himself the greatest of all apologetics. His testimony is worth all the academic treatises on the Resurrection which were ever written, for its argument is unanswerable.

¶ If you have ever watched the dragon-flies flitting in the sunlight above the surface of some pool you have doubtless noticed that while from time to time their bodies are immersed in the water, their wings are always kept dry for flight. And you have perhaps seen, also, how that when by mischance the wings of one have become wet, it is unable to rise from the water and in consequence forfeits its life. This is a vivid picture of the Christian in the world. If he allows his power of mounting up into the clear air of communion with God—the force whereby he seeks 'the things that are above'—to become weakened by his contacts with the world, he is like a fly with wet wings. The very necessities of the case compel us to preserve inviolate the purity of our ideal and the power of our aim.

2. Like all life's lessons, this personal significance of the Resurrection is one which we increasingly apprehend. At no point can we say, 'I have fully understood or attained.' Our reach is always greater than our grasp, and there is continual fresh light glowing from the risen Christ to guide us in our upward search. 'Excelsior' is the descriptive life-motto of the man who realizes himself as one 'risen with Christ'; and while he is never aught but fully satisfied with the perfections of his great Ideal, he never for one moment pauses to be satisfied in himself. Such pause, indeed, would be fatal to his true progress and would defeat the God-formed purpose of his life. There is in a little churchyard in Switzerland a simple inscription on the tomb of one who perished in an Alpine accident: 'He died climbing.' He had heard the call of the mountains and lost his life in endeavouring to respond. We have heard the call of the risen Christ, but unlike the climber, we gain our lives in our sustained attempt to respond worthily. 'Seek those things that are above,' is a call to enjoy the largest possible life, for the very struggle develops latent possibilities and capacities, and each step upward is into fuller liberty and more perfect manhood.

¶ One of Dicksee's most inspiring pictures is that to which he has given the name, 'The Ideal.' It is the picture of a youth who has climbed up a steep ascent, and with infinite difficulty has reached a high and jutting peak. His eyes uplifted are full of the fire of aspiration; his arms are eagerly outstretched. High though he has climbed he has not yet attained. In the wreathed mist in front of him there is a Figure which he strains to reach, but which has left the earth, and is rising toward the heavens. It is the prize of the 'high calling in Christ Jesus' that he seeks to gain, and that he will gain if he continue following.

3. But all this on our part is entirely dependent upon our recognition that the Christ who is above is the Christ also 'who is our life.' Nothing less than 'the power of his resurrection' can ever serve to create and maintain in us this determining attitude. Self-resolve, how-

ever well-intentioned, is altogether inadequate to such a life as that to which we are summoned by Christ's resurrection. Apart from a new strength of will, a quickened power of vision, and a renewed energy of action—in short, a partaking of the Divine nature—we can never rise to the height of this calling. Easter proclaims Christ to be '*the Lord* both of the dead and the living'; and only by giving Him the place which He claims of sovereign right may we know the power by which such newness of life becomes not merely an aim but a daily-increasing experience.

For resurrection living
  There is resurrection power,
And the praise and prayer of trusting
  May glorify each hour.
For common days are holy,
  And years an Eastertide,
To those who with the living Lord
  In living faith abide.

Life Hid with Christ

Col. iii. 3.—'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.'

The calmness with which St Paul utters this great principle is astonishing. One feels it to be a conspicuous mark of its higher origin in the Bible that it speaks of stupendous themes with such quiet power, with the composure of eternal things. Men get hold of a great idea, or an idea they suppose great, and then they fret and fume over the discovery with a dust and excited commotion that half conceal the new find. But few things are more impressive than the tranquil strength of the Apostles. The message they told was not their message. The gospel was no windfall of their own. God's truth, they knew, if only it were declared with plain sincerity, would perform without fail its own specific work, and bear authentic witness to its own origin. It is with the same restrained power that the Apostle now writes: 'Your life is hid with Christ in God.' He is so sure, that argument or appeal there is none. The believer's hidden life is something so real, so basal, that proof can be dispensed with. Like the joy of sunlight, or the fresh beauty of a summer hillside, it is not an inference from anything; it is the first presupposition and beginning of all else. It is the primal fact on which we take our stand, with a confidence that may falter but does not slacken, and from which we look out across life's varied story, and up to the heaven that is coming.

1. *The Old Life Left Behind.*—'Ye are dead,' St Paul writes, or even, as in stricter accuracy we may render, 'ye died.' He is indicating a definite occasion in the past. Sometimes the passage of a soul into God's kingdom is a very sudden thing. It may even be as the flight of a bird for swiftness. We lie down one night our old selves, and ere we sleep again the revolution has occurred. In this text, however, suddenness of that kind is not necessarily implied. Men may die swiftly, or they may die slowly; it matters nothing, once they have wakened on the immortal side of death. At the equator no visible line is stretched round the world for all to see; nevertheless, the line is actually crossed; at some definite point the ship leaves one hemisphere and enters on the other.

Union to Jesus Christ produces a moral and spiritual transmutation in men analogous to death and resurrection. Death is for the soul no cessation of existence, but rather a transition into a new environment, like buds rising above the sod in spring. In like manner by regeneration the soul is not robbed of its identity, but attachment to Christ elevates it into a new region. He died *for* sin, to break its power, to undo the ruin, to rectify the wrong; we, through Him die *to* sin, in sympathy with His righteousness, aided by His influence, impelled and compelled by His great love. Not that we become sinless. But, whatever sin remains, the glad and honest certainty is now open to us that our steadfast desire and habitual choice are now identified radically with the will of Christ. He has made us new creatures, in whom sin's tyranny is broken; He has given us a new self, the only self worth having or worth keeping. And formidable as are still the world, the flesh, and the devil, now we know that there is a Brother beside us in the conflict, and a victorious unseen Presence near us that will be ours for ever and ever. Thus through Him lives that were hopeless can become blessed, the barren can become fruitful and the weakest more than conqueror. The old life dies when faith is born.

Touch the rock-door of my heart,
Christ, dead for my sin!
Say, 'Come—let us rise, and depart
From the shadows within—

'Out where the light of the stars
Shines clear overhead,
Where the soul is free from its bars,
And Sin lies dead.'

And dead the old Shadow lies,
That has chilled my breast;
Say to the sleepers, 'Arise!'
Lead them to rest!

2. *The Hidden Life now Possessed.*—'Your life is hid with Christ.' In other words, there is something about each genuine believer, however simple, which will more than tax the keenest intelligence to explain. Christian character is not to be accounted for by mere surface phenomena. To unveil the secret, you must go down into the buried regions beneath ordinary thoughts and avocations, down into the unseen depths of personality. As you cross a highland moor you may come upon a curious bright streak of green, winding in and out among the heather, its pure and shining verdure clearly marked against the dull brown of its immediate surroundings. What is it, and how came it there? Whence rises the sap to feed this soft elastic ribband of turf? There is a tiny stream below, a runnel of sweet water flowing down there out of sight, only hinting its presence by the green beauty above. So the springs of Christian life are hid, hid with Christ in God.

They are hid, for one thing, from the unsympathizing world. Always to the outsider there must appear something inscrutable and mysterious in those who live by faith in the Son of God. He may merely wonder at the mystery, or he may dumbly resent it; but he is always conscious of its presence. Thus it is that, often, when he inquires how personal religion is to be accounted for, with a surprising superficiality he accepts any explanation but the right one. Self-interest, fear, tradition, sheer unrelieved delusion; these are among the theories by which it has been sought to render the prevalence of faith intelligible; and by explaining it, to rob it of substantial power. All that a believer may plead of light given in darkness, and comfort in affliction, and chastisement amid sin, and succour that dispels the lowering cloud of temptation, is listened to as 'a tale of little meaning, tho' the words be strong.' The Christian secret is a secret from the world.

¶ There is an old and beautiful Spanish legend of a certain Convent of St Benedict, not far from the old city of Toledo, which was the retreat of a sisterhood embracing some of the noblest blood of all Spain. When the Moors overran the country after Don Roderick and his fine chivalry were slain, they came to this convent and vowed its destruction. But just as they were making their final assault the convent disappeared. Cloisters, cells, chapel, belfry, with their inmates, sank underground. Forty years after, a lonely traveller, journeying through the forest at eventide, heard in an open space of rising ground the mysterious echoes of vesper bells and voices floating on the still evening air as they breathed forth the praise of evensong. Nothing but a moss-grown stone pinnacle surmounted by a Cross broke the dark glades of forest on either hand. Yet the harmonies from that buried convent thrilled his heart with wonder and awe. Ethereal, mystic, heavenly, they broke upon the ear like the echoes of another world. Such is the Christian life ever since the first Easter Day, buried away out of the sight of men, stolen from the grasp of the boasting foe, 'hidden in the sealed stone,' yet still exerting its powerful spell almost unrecognized over the hearts of men, still breathing forth its heavenly music to souls who have spiritual leisure to hearken to it, still filling the solitary place with mysterious praise.

But the text has a still profounder meaning. For it means, or at least it implies, that a believer's deepest life is in some sense hidden from himself. To-day men of science, obviously, are moving about among forces whose nature they but half realize, and which only now and then flash an isolated token of their character into the world of knowledge; and the same thing, in its measure, holds true of the inmost experience of the Christian. The flowers that spring from fellowship with God, and the fruit of it, are his delight; but the roots go away down invisibly. He knows that grace unspeakable is offered freshly to him every hour, and that he is bidden respond to it with trust and longing; but how the two meet and mingle in

his soul—the Divine grace and the human trust—he cannot tell. He finds that communion with God sets his heart perfectly at rest, and that this strange inward power is never so effectual as in the midst of trial; but the rationale of it is all beyond him. He can feel the power of Christ resting upon him, turning his very weakness into strength; but the methods and processes by which such things happen surpass his full comprehension, as truly as does the mysterious relation of soul and body.

What is all this except to affirm that the fountains of our highest life, in virtue of which we endure, are in Christ's keeping, not our own? He guards for us the springs of faith and love. Out of the reservoir, not here but yonder, in which our supplies are stored, enough is bestowed for each day's need. All that Christ has, He has for those who trust Him; and His sorrow is that they draw upon Him so meagrely, with the perpetual misgiving that they are asking too much. The explanation of past failure or inward poverty is, always, not that Christ is less rich than we had supposed, but that our heart has been narrow and unwilling.

Life's resources, being hid thus in Christ, are protected against trouble and dispeace. Here, of course, we must distinguish carefully between what are only superficial incidents, and that which is passing in the depths. At first sight the experience of a Christian man impresses a bystander as pretty much the same with that of any one else. He is not spared the common vicissitudes of existence. Like his neighbours, he enters the harsh turmoil of business, with its cares and disappointing reverses. He, too, must often sow for a harvest that never comes. And there is all the pain of wearing suspense, and perplexity of conscience, and fears for those he loves; no exemption is allowed him, and he claims none. All this and more is true; it is the common lot of man. Nevertheless, this accumulated list of ills, though multiplied and intensified, need not touch the inmost life seated in the depths of the heart. The storm may rage upon the coast, yet not a breath of its fury reach the sequestered valley that nestles in the bosom of the hills. And in the same way, amid his occupations and even his sore distresses, the believer may have a mind at perfect peace; for his life, the true life, the life that really makes the man, is hid with Christ in God.

They say there is a hollow safe and still,
A point of colour and repose
Within the centre of a flame, where life might dwell
Unharmed and unconsumed, as in a luminous shell,
Which the bright walls of fire enclose
In breachless splendour, barrier that no foes could pass at will.

There is a point of rest
At the great centre of the cyclone's force,
A silence at its secret source;
A little child might slumber undistressed,
Without the ruffle of one fairy curl,
In that strange central calm amid the mighty whirl.

¶ Stevenson Arthur Blackwood always referred to the words, '*Your life is hid with Christ in God*,' as the means of his conversion. William Pennefather, in the church at Barnet, gave out these lines of Newton's hymn:

Your life is hid with Christ in God
Beyond the reach of harm;

and the Spirit brought them home to the asking heart in a final crisis of glad assurance. Who does not know that fear often lies near great joy, and that a treasure may seem far too precious to be safe? But here, he felt, was a safety equal to the treasure; 'with Christ in God,' a double rampart, all divine.[1]

3. *The Life yet to be Revealed.*—In the New Testament men's eyes and thoughts are ever bent forward, as they wait for the voice and footfall of a returning Lord, when that which is hid now will be so no longer. It *is* hidden now, just because we are here and Christ is yonder. But like the bud sleeping within its swelling sheath, the Christian's present lot is big with promise. One day the secret will be out. 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.'

Take an instance. Think of a countryman of our own, at work in India. Civil servant, perhaps, or soldier, missionary, merchant—he labours on with hand and brain, doing his appointed work bravely. But his home is in England. Those he loves best in all the world

[1] H. C. G. Moule.

are there, and where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also; and though he would scorn to neglect duty, yet his truest life centres not in the daily routine of his station, but in that home far away. It is an inner life, a secret hoard of thought and feeling, unsuspected by those nearest him, from which nevertheless his noblest inspiration and courage rise. So he labours on, knowing that on some approaching day foreign service will be over, and his face will be set homeward; and then, what used to be no more than the private luxury of quiet fancy will be the open and perpetual interest of each successive day and hour.

We give thanks to God for all the punctual strength and comfort that descend to us now; we bless the hand that strews them on our way; we seek to employ them in His great service. But all the while the thought is uppermost that something better, *far* better, is yet to be revealed. This is not to say that we ought to long for death; that may be sentiment only, not religion; for with the time or mode of death appointed us we are unconcerned, resigning it gladly to the secret love of God. Yet more and more, if we are Christians at all, we are growing always surer that God has kept the best to the last. Here we draw from the stream, but one day we shall stand beside the fountain-head. We shall leave the foreign land, and travel 'to God, who is our home.'

What lies beyond?
I have but little care—
Since Christ is there—
Himself the deathless bond,
For ever binding me
Unto the Home where I would be—
Himself its temple, and its light,
Of more than noonday radiance bright—
Himself the Rest where I would dwell—
The Haven where my anchor soon shall fall—
Himself my All in all.
I cannot tell
Of glory that awaits
Within the gates:
A little while I walk with vision dim,
But O, I know that He is there,
All-glorious, All-fair,
And I shall be with Him.[1]

[1] Edith H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 15.

Equality and Brotherhood

Col. iii. 11.—'Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.'

In that ancient world into which Christ was born, and where St Paul preached, the social cleavages and national antagonisms were more marked than they are with us. There was the separation due to the different ideals of excellence and life that were cherished: the Greek ideal of beauty and charm in art, literature, and the person; and the Jewish ideal of narrow and strict duty in the practice of a stern religion. Closely connected with that was the religious distinction between the uncircumcised Gentile, whom the Jew despised as unclean and forgotten of God, and the circumcised Jew, whom the Gentile hated and ridiculed as a conceited fanatic. Then there was the national separation, largely of culture and privilege, between the Greek and the barbarian—the man who was not a Greek and the savage Scythian who dwelt beyond the pale of all civilization. Deeper and more hopeless than any, where slavery was an essential part of the social fabric, was the great gulf fixed between freeman and bondman—the slave and his master. Finally, there was the refusal of any true respect, or prospect of usefulness, to women.

But in the fellowship of the Christian Church these causes of man's inhumanity to man were overcome and disappeared. Men and women put off anger and wrath, and spake the truth together in love, because they consorted not as Jews and Greeks, barbarians, Scythians, slaves or freemen, but in the fellowship of a common Christian experience. They found that they were kin to each other because Christ was *all*, or everything, to each of them, and was *in all* of them. Christ had awakened new aspirations in them, set new ideals before them, and was satisfying and fulfilling these for them. They had thus risen above the old aspirations and ideals, distinctive of their respective countries and ranks, and had 'put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew.'

There was a time when the Apostle himself had thought of men as Greeks or otherwise; now he thinks of them as the citizens of the

world. Once he had looked upon them as possible proselytes; now he looks upon them as possible saints, as those for whom Christ died. He has caught the great conception of the unity of mankind; he sees the oneness of the race, its common sin, its common sorrow, its common pain, its common hope, its common destiny—and from the moment of that vision he gave himself to the service of mankind.

1. Christ displays and ensures the true equality of men, inasmuch as He can be everything to every man, and consequently makes the same supreme appeal to all. He can, and does, touch all sorts and conditions of men everywhere, in all ages of history, and prove Himself equally to all their salvation and desire. Thus He puts us all on the same level.

Every other teacher or guide of men has been the product of his own time and people, but Jesus is as unique as He is universal. He is so intensely and universally human that neither rank nor nationality has any relevance in our thoughts of Him. He is for every kindred and tribe, as for all men and women alike, whatever be their education or social standing. Nor have the centuries dimmed the light of His teaching, or weakened the force of His authority on us to-day. He is for all time as for all people. Time, which consumes all things, and covers knowledge and prophecy with oblivion, or renders them 'dry and exhaust,' has left the doctrine of Jesus as fresh and living to-day as when first He uttered it.

¶ Christ can meet the world-wide need. The proof of Christ being a universal Saviour is found not only in a few texts in the Word of God, but in many transformed lives throughout the world. One of my greatest discoveries, in travelling through the five continents, is that people, although of many different customs and creeds, temperaments and tongues, are all equally and fully satisfied in Him. Human nature is the same the world over, and the only One who can satisfy is also universal and unchanging—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.[1]

In Thee is every type fulfilled,
In Thee is every yearning stilled,
For perfect beauty, truth, and love;
For Thou art always far above
The grandest glimpse of our ideal;
Yet more and more we know Thee real,
And marvel more and more to see
Thine infinite reality!

[1] Sadhu Sundar Singh.

The reason for this universal appeal and abiding influence is not far to seek: Jesus has awakened the conscience of the race, and held it with *the true ideal for humanity*. In Christ every one can see the kind of person God meant him to be, the kind of character he ought to acquire and exhibit, the spirit that should animate his life. For Christ has taken our life and lived it Himself, and has explained and enforced the ideal He thus realized. It is not that we should all occupy the same position, use the same tools, fulfil the same functions, or do the same work. The Jew and the Greek have each made their peculiar contribution to the heritage of the race, and we can afford to lose neither. All are not masters, nor need all be workmen. Men can never take the place of women, nor women the place of men, without stultifying themselves. But moral goodness does not vary with latitude and longitude, from age to age, or from sex to sex. Righteousness, holiness, charity, courage, patience, and purity, faith in God and love of Him, the things that are above where Christ sitteth at His right hand—these are the same for all. Christ has awakened humanity's conscience to these things, and all humanity finds them realized in Him.

But not only is Christ the Ideal for all: He is *the Friend of all*. From every people and land, in every age, and from every class, men have turned to Him to find, not only that He embodied what they should be, but that He understood them, their idiosyncrasies, and infirmities, and difficulties, and had compassion on them, albeit His perfections condemned their failures; that He sympathized, and could interpret them to themselves as one who had passed through all and had overcome. He is the universal Sufferer, who was 'tempted in all points'; and He is the universal Victor who was 'yet without sin.'

O Saviour Christ, Thou too art Man;
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried;
Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds that shame would hide.[1]

[1] H. Twells.

Hence we rise to this final and sublime conception of Christ: He is *the universal Saviour*. The Ideal for all, the sympathetic Friend of all, He can answer for and help every one to realize and attain. He has touched the lowest depth of sin's consequence and curse, that in the fullness of His universal charity He might 'taste death for every man,' and so for all has He overcome.

2. In the measure that we cherish that ideal, and respond to that sympathy and power to save, we shall understand and realize the Brotherhood of Man, or discover Christ in all men.

The contemplation of man as man, or insistence on our mere humanity, will never abolish our separations or reconcile our differences, but rather accentuate them. In all of us there is an instinct to get away from man as he is, to rise higher, and become something better. So we clothe ourselves in names and ranks and professions, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. That is all we can do apart from Christ: thank God that we are not as other men—the very negation of brotherhood. But to see in each other what man might be, what God meant him to be, what Christ lived and died to realize for him, is to awake to the Brotherhood of Man. It is their common destiny, ideals, and aims that bring men together as comrades, and unite them in the bonds of brotherhood. To discern in any one, no matter what be his country, colour, or language, the same hopes that uplift, the same spirit that animates, and the same confidence that encourages you is to find in him a brother. With him you could never be at war. You are at one with him in Christ.

Christ's faith makes but one Body of all Souls,
And Love's that Body's Soul. . . .
What Soul soe'er in any language can
Speak heaven like hers is my Soul's countryman.[1]

Can we feel towards our servants and workpeople, or our employers and masters, as brethren? Can the educated and cultured regard the ignorant and boorish as their kith and kin? Or can the unlearned and uncultivated get over the pride and distance of such as are more fortunately placed, or get rid of their own shyness and awkwardness in dealing with them? Can we be 'sib to' the savage and the heathen? Yes, if we have enough of the spirit of Christ to recognize in any the soul that apprehends the glory of God's calling in Christ, the heart that believes in His love and accepts His grace—or even the possibility of such a soul and heart in them.

Jesus hated vice and degradation, the sins and evil humours of men, with a purity of feeling, and He denounced them with a power of invective, that are beyond us. But He loved all men, and was not ashamed to call them brethren, because He saw in them the possibilities of the children of God, and He sympathized with them in their struggles and failures. So He sacrificed Himself to save and help them.

[1] Crashaw.

Forbearing and Forgiving

Col. iii. 13.—'Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.'

Scholarship has made a discovery about the text which has enriched its meaning. It is not 'Christ' but the 'Master' that is the real word. The text really runs, 'As your master forgave you, so ought ye to forgive your fellow-servants.' We are not addressed as simple human units; but as men and women who have ties of a common service, a sense of special companionship, and the reverence for a common Master linking us together. When the Apostle exhorts the Colossian Christians, and us through them, when he appeals to us to forgive as the Master did, he brings into play a subtle and complex sentiment which it is difficult to define, but whose power as a motive we must all acknowledge. There is command in it; for who can issue orders if the Master cannot? There is the force of example accompanying the precept and showing us how to do what is required. But, more potent than all, there is the Master Himself calling upon us to exercise the duty of forgiveness through that personal tie which binds us to Him—a power which defies description, where love, kinship, companionship, and service unite to make a force much more potent than legal precept or vague ethical ideal.

1. *The Forgiveness of Jesus.*—We are to do as He does; to forgive as our Master has forgiven and still forgives. What that kind of forgiving was we can learn both from word and from fact.

(1) *The Word.* The word used in our text, and translated forgive, is not a common one—at least as used in this sense. It is the verb made from that noun which is variously translated in the New Testament by love, or charity, or grace. It is the word which the Evangelist uses when he tells us how Jesus gave sight to many that were blind (Luke vii. 21). It is the word employed to say that our Lord promised to grant to Paul the lives of all that were with him in the ship in which he travelled to Rome (Acts xxvii. 24). It is the word which pledges God in that fullest of all promises: 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things' (Rom. viii. 32). The word is, if we may use the expression, an eminently Christian one.

Humanity knows what forgiveness is; but it is only Christianity that has any idea of the special kind of forgiveness which this word suggests—a forgiving which is also a giving. There is in it the loving sympathy of a brother; the yearning of the father over a prodigal son; self-effacement in the presence of injury; and, above all, the longing to save those who are about to perish, even at the cost of life itself. To forgive as Christ forgave—the word itself suggests it—meant that Christ had to give Himself in His forgiving.

(2) *The Thing.* Think what this forgiveness of Jesus must have meant to Him, and then see what the Apostle is asking from us. See how hard a thing it was. He forgave us, not in the sense of passing over, of blotting out, or of forgetting. He extended to us, the sinful children of men, that gracious loving sympathy which is the greatest part of this kind of forgiveness.

He tabernacled among men. Think for a moment what that meant for Jesus. 'He knew what was in man.' What a terrible knowledge! How we ought to thank God that He has not burdened us with it. Have we not—all of us—at times evil thoughts and suggestions that we are glad to keep concealed from those who are nearest to us? Do we not carry within us passions which occasion might let loose unless grace prevented? Our neighbours know nothing about these things within us—we ourselves are scarcely conscious of them. They would call us very ugly names if they could see what lurk in the secret chambers of the heart, in the slums of the City of Mansoul. Well, but Jesus knew all that. He knew what was in every man He met with. He knows it now. Yet He forgives.

Then remember that Jesus was the pure and the holy One. Sin was abhorrent to Him. When holiness like His was confronted with man's sin, compelled to come in contact with it, to company with it day by day, sorrow such as that must have become the intensest suffering; but out of this cloud of suffering He led back many sons into glory.

¶ It is said of more than one distinguished physician that, standing before a portrait painted by Sargent, he started, seeing at once on the canvas what had eluded him in the living face of his patient, clear evidences of some disease he had not noticed in the man, or that had baffled diagnosis, and that, calling on him again, he found that the painter was right, had seen what no one else had seen, but what was really there. And so no one can read the Gospels without realizing how much sin Christ saw in us, whom others count respectable and seemly, and how His whole soul shuddered at the horror of it.[1]

2. *Our Forgiveness.*—We are to forgive our fellow-servants—our fellowmen—as our Master forgave us.

(1) With the same kind of forgiveness. We must have the same courtesy of action—the loving sympathy of a brother; the yearning of a father over the prodigal son; the same self-effacement and the same readiness to sacrifice self. It is a hard matter to exercise this kind of forgiveness. We, too, suffer contradiction of men. We are wronged, and we know it. There is such a thing as justice, we say, and we must have it. Let us look into our own hearts. Have we not wounded the Master over and over again, wronged Him times and ways without number, and has He not forgiven us over and over again? Yes, and forgiven us not in a merely sentimental way. Jesus practises and enjoins a thoroughly practical forgiveness. 'But I say unto you which hear

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, 90.

—Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them which curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.'

¶ My neighbour, or my servant, or my child, has done me an injury, and it is just that he should suffer an injury in return. Such is the doctrine which Jesus Christ summoned His whole resources of persuasion to oppose. 'Love your enemy; bless those that curse you': such, He says, is the practice of God, and such must ye imitate if ye would be the children of God.[1]

But how can we control our feelings? How can we love our enemies? The Master knows that we may not be able to control our feelings and that it may be impossible to love at command; but then He tells us how to create that love which seems so hard to reach. We are to pray for them and to pray good things for them. We are to love them in deeds, and the feeling will come of its own accord. We cannot control our feelings, but at least we ought to be able to control our actions, and out of the actions the feelings will spring.

(2) Our forgiveness must go as deep as our Master's; or, if that is too hard a saying, it must aim at going as deep. The Master is very peremptory about this. 'Resist not him that is evil,' He says; 'but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' Take those passages in the Sermon on the Mount in which our Lord contrasts the rules of the old economy with those which are to regulate the new, and you will find that Jesus leaves no place for the feeling of revenge. No injustice is to permit us to seek a personal revenge. All wrongs done to us as individuals are to be so many occasions in which we can show a Christian forgiveness.

The fairest action of our human life
  Is scorning to revenge an injury;
For who forgives without a further strife,
  His adversary's heart to him doth tie.
And 'tis a firmer conquest, truly said,
To win the heart, than overthrow the head.[2]

(3) The last thing about this duty of Christian forgiveness is that it is to extend to ourselves. Who has not said: I can never forgive myself? Have not all of us chafed at our own sins and follies, felt hot and bitter about them long after they are done and to all seeming done with? It is the strongest natures that find it hardest to exercise this part of Christian forgiveness.

The unforgiving spirit in such cases appears as an angel of light; it disguises itself as a duty; it takes a pride in just dealing with self. Yet it may be one of the most subtle forms of that self-righteousness against which the old theologians were never weary of warning their hearers. We can forgive our neighbours; that does not involve any loss of self-respect. But to forgive ourselves—that is quite another question. Many a wrecked life is due to this unforgiveness of self. The prodigal would never have come home had he been unable to forgive himself.

With many of us this difficulty of forgiving ourselves stands in the way of our getting and feeling that we have obtained the forgiveness of God. The old Mystics saw very deeply into things when they taught that the secret of all true heart religion is to overcome self; to get rid of all selfish feelings; to empty one's self of self; and so make room for God. This unwillingness to forgive one's self is the last refuge of the selfish spirit.

¶ There is an old mediæval story of a dreamer who dreamt that he saw the gate of heaven and the souls flitting in; but one soul kept hovering about the entrance, and never crossed. He asked why; and was told that the hesitating soul had been forgiven by God, and so had been allowed to come to the gates of Paradise, but had not yet forgiven itself, and so could not enter.

The Perfecting Power of Love

Col. iii. 14.—'Above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness' (R.V.).

The picture in the Apostle's mind is that of one who is putting on his raiment. He sees a man throwing around his body the loose and flowing garments of antiquity. And then it occurs to him that these loose garments, no matter how fine or beautiful they be, can never be worn with comfort or with grace unless they are clasped together with a girdle. Without that girdle, drawing all together, they hamper and hinder a man at every turn. *It* is the perfect bond of robe and tunic, the final touch that makes them serviceable. And so, says Paul, is it with love; it is the girdle of every

[1] Percy Bysshe Shelley. [2] Lady Carew.

other grace; it is the final touch that beautifies the whole, and makes every garment of the spirit perfect. Under the figure, then, there lies one thought—it is the thought of the perfecting of love.

1. Love is needed for *the perfecting of gifts*. How true this is of spiritual gifts we learn from the First Epistle to the Corinthians. That Church at Corinth was very rich in gifts; so rich, that there was trouble over them. One had the gift of prophecy, and one of prayer; and one had the gift of tongues, and one of healing; and every man, in the ardour of the spirit, was claiming for his own gift a proud pre-eminence; until at last the danger grew so great, and the scandal of bickering so soul-destroying, that the Corinthian Christians wrote to Paul begging him for his advice and guidance. What was the counsel which the Apostle gave? First, he said, Covet earnestly the *best* gifts. Remember, he means, that though all gifts are of God, yet all are not equal in spiritual value. But then immediately he turns from that, as though it were too hard for these Corinthians, and he says, 'but yet I shew you a more excellent way'—and that more excellent way is love. Without love, the graces of the spirit will irritate like flowing garments in the gale. Love is the perfect bond which makes them serviceable, keeping each in its peculiar place.

This is true, also, of artistic and intellectual gifts. Take, for example, the gift of song. We have all listened to some singers who have set us wondering at their perfect art. Artistically there was not a flaw to find; there was consummate mastery and perfect execution; and yet the song has somehow failed to move us, or to strike a responsive chord within our breast. The gift was there—that no one would deny—and it had been trained with splendid perseverance; but there was one thing lacking to complete it, and that was the perfecting impress of the heart. You can arrest and dazzle without love; but without love you cannot charm or win. You cannot open these ivory gates and golden that lead to the secret places of the soul.

2. Love is needed for *the perfecting of service*. If one were asked to tell what life is, it might be difficult to give an answer. Perhaps we get nearest to life's deepest meaning, when we interpret it in terms of service. All life is service. We all must serve to live. Obedience is the first condition of all progress. Hence Christ, the consummation of humanity, was among men as one who serveth.

When we look at service we can distinguish ascending stages in it. In the first place, and on the lowest stage, we discover the service of necessity. There are many things which we are forced to do, and which we would never dream of doing were we free. They meet us in the performance of our work, perhaps, and we would gladly shirk them if we could. But we cannot shirk them if we wish to live; they are part of the terms on which we have our being. Such service, to which we are compelled, is the poorest and the lowest form of service. True, it is dignified when it is bravely borne, and carried through in an unmurmuring way. But the very fact that it is forced upon us, and would be at once rejected were we free, invests it with a certain meanness, and robs it of liberty and of delight.

The next stage is the service of duty—all that we do because it is our duty. It is the service we give because we ought. It, too, may be uncongenial service—not at all what we should have chosen for ourselves; and we may think it hard that we should have been summoned to bear such burdens or carry through such tasks. But conscience tells us it is the path for us, and so we pray to God to strengthen us; and then, with whatever manhood we possess, we go quietly forward on the path of duty. There is always something noble in that service, yet it is hardly the highest kind of service. Something is wanting to make the service perfect; to make it a thing of beauty and a joy for ever; and what it lacks to crown it with delight, is the final touch of love. It is love that turns the task into delight. Love never asks how little can I do. Love always asks how much. And that is why in all the range of service there is no service like that inspired by love.

¶ In Samoa, Stevenson had left his small hut and removed into a large house. There had not yet been time for Love to line it. Stevenson felt sad and weary, and had forgotten to bespeak his nightly coffee and cigars. Whilst he was thinking, the door quietly opened and the native boy entered carrying the tray with that on it for which he longed. Stevenson said in the native tongue, 'Great is your forethought.'

The boy corrected him and said, 'Great is the love.'[1]

3. Love is needed for *the perfecting of relationships*.—It is in the ties which link it to the lives of others, that life enlarges to its fairest measure. Just think how poor our life would be to-day could we cut the cords which bind us to our friends. Son, father, sister, brother, friend and comrade—what would life be without such words as these? For no man liveth to himself—when he attempts it he is no longer living. It is in its wide and various relationships that life is ennobled and enriched.

Now, there are three great enemies of sweet relationship. The first is selfishness, the second pride, and the third destroyer of life's ties is fear. No man or woman who is selfish can ever know the joy of deep relationship. If you are selfish you cannot *be* a friend. If you are selfish you cannot *have* a friend. For we never tell our secrets to the selfish, nor open our hearts to them in happy confidence, nor lean upon them with that confiding hope that calls for, and is always sure of, sympathy. There is in pride a strange power of isolation. We say of the man who is proud that he is cold. No one is warmed by him in this chill world. No warmth of other lives dispels his iciness. The proud man is the solitary man, and so always is the man who is afraid. Where there is selfishness, or pride, or fear, then, you never can have the fullness of relationship. Something is lacking in every human tie so long as these are mighty in the heart. And it takes a power that can conquer these, and whose empire means the killing out of these, if the relationships that make our life are to come slowly to a perfect growth.

Nothing but love, possessing all the heart, is able to dispossess these enemies. Love is the sworn enemy of selfishness, for it sets a crown upon the other-self. Love is the sworn enemy of pride, for love is ever warm and ever humble. And as for fear, there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, for fear hath torment.

¶ 'It seems to me,' remarked Isabel, 'that love is the leaven that leavens the whole lump. It is only when people begin to care for each other that the fineness of human nature is seen. I was horribly selfish myself till I really cared for somebody, and then I gradually became quite nice.'[1]

4. Love is needed for *the perfecting of religion*. If no relationship of earth is perfect till love has entered with its benediction, how can a man's relationship to God be perfect, if love is wanting? For true religion is not a thing of doctrine, nor of eager and intellectual speculation; it is the tie that binds the life on earth to the infinite and eternal life beyond the veil. Only when a man can lift his eyes, and say with a cry of victory, 'God loves me'; only when he believes, though all be dark, that the God who reigneth is a God of love; only then does his religion become real, a very present help in time of trouble.

It is just that which makes ours the perfect religion. For the perfecting of religion love is needed, and that love has been revealed in Christ. God commendeth His own love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish. When we have looked upon the face of Christ, there are a thousand things we still may doubt; but there is one thing we can never doubt again, and that is the love of God.

¶ I was standing not long ago by a child's sick-cot; and if there is any sight which it is hard to look upon, it is that of the little one, to whom it is all such a mystery, racked and tortured with pain. But the brave little heroine whispered, 'Father, give me your hand'; and holding her father's hand, though riddled with pain, she never moaned. And so I. I do not know what others may not be able to do; I criticize no one, think hard thoughts of no one; I only say that in my bewilderments, sorrows, heartaches, struggles, I cannot rest upon ideas, visions, aspirations, strivings. I say, 'Father, give me Thine hand.' I can be patient and brave then. Father! Thy name is Love.[2]

[1] A. R. Simpson.

[1] Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, *Concerning Isabel Carnaby*, ch. xxiv.

[2] J. M. Jones, *The Cup of Cold Water*, 142.

The Peace of Christ

Col. iii. 15.—'Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body' (R.V.).

1. In essence there is no difference between the peace of God and the peace of Christ—the one is the other. Christ's peace was not merely like the Divine peace, but was the Divine peace in every sense possible. At the same time we may be glad that the Revised Version has restored the correct reading, because it is in keeping with the whole passage, and because it brings the duty inculcated closer to us, and makes it more easily understood. It is in keeping with the passage; for Paul is showing how, in the risen life, Christ is all and in all. Christians are called, he says, to be kind, and humble, and meek, and long-suffering, as Christ was. They are called to forbear and forgive as Christ forgave. They must let the Word of Christ dwell in them, and follow His precepts. They must say everything and do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. They must let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. And we are glad to have the translation thus amended, not only because it makes the passage more consistent as a whole, but because it makes this particular precept more intelligible. For this is stated as a duty, something we are to do. Peace is held forth as something we ought to have and can have. At first this seems strange, as we usually think of it as a blessed state which some men reach, as some fail. We think of it as a condition with which we have little to do; dependent on circumstances over which we have not much control. And to advise men to possess the peace of God only tends to further this idea. The peace of God in itself means nothing to us. We do not ignore it; we cannot understand it; we cannot tell of what sort it is. But when we comprehend that the peace of God means the peace of Christ, it is like having an unintelligible sentence of a foreign language translated into our mother tongue. We are in the region of practice. It is no longer an abstract religious idea, but a fact which has been actually seen on the earth, a kind of life which has actually been lived. The peace which Christ gives to believers is just the peace which He had when on earth: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' This was His dying bequest. It is something He had, due to His state of soul towards God; something He kept to the end, even when He went down to the Gates of Death; the secret He possessed which it was part of His life's work to reveal. To learn it we must go, therefore, to His life and teaching; to have it we must obey His word and follow His example.

2. Before asking of what nature Christ's peace was, notice the use which the Apostle asks his readers to make of it—'Let it rule in your hearts.' It is a metaphor of which Paul was very fond, taken from the contests of wrestlers and runners. The word 'rule' is strictly arbitrate; and as a referee takes upon him to decide difficulties which may arise in a contest, and the combatants agree to submit to his ruling, so, says Paul, let the peace of Christ be umpire in your hearts amid the conflict of motives and desires. Let it decide which is right; make it the supreme force to regulate, and govern, and superintend; make it the bar at which all difficulties are finally decided. It is to work as a guide, a familiar councillor, always on the spot to decide, to turn unrest and indecision into peace. Paul speaks of it as something which all Christians may have and ought to have. It is not dependent on special providence, nor is it dependent on exceptional grace. It is open to all, and therefore it is a duty incumbent on all. Why, then, is it so seldom attained? Peace is the dream of the race; dispeace is the experience of the race.

For a few years men long for happiness; for ever they are longing for rest. Happiness is never set before us as a duty; Christ offered no man happiness. And yet sometimes, if only in fragmentary fashion, men reach it and grasp it. Happiness comes from the satisfaction of desire; and sometimes desire is satisfied. But happiness cannot be the lot of all. Some of us will never get that which we think would make us perfectly happy. Some of our desires will remain unappeased. So long as there are pain and sorrow in the world—that is, so long as the world lasts—happiness can never be the ideal for all men. It is otherwise with peace, which is set as ideal for all; nay, even duty for all. Happiness comes from the outside; peace must be in us. Most of our happiness, or what we call happiness, is a series of distractions, surface

gaiety, outside amusement, dependent on circumstances. The thirst for happiness grows by what it feeds on; it becomes insatiable in its attempts to satiate itself. There is a pathetic sketch in one of the historical books of the Bible of an anxious king sending out messenger after messenger to ask, 'Is it peace?' When his watchman spied the company of Jehu, the avenger, riding to the city, and when he himself came up pale and trembling, asking, with trembling lip, 'Is it peace?' the answer was, 'What hast thou to do with peace?' On all selfish, godless lives, spent for the gratification of desire, whatever be the desire, the doom shall fall when happiness is no longer possible and when peace is lost. What hast thou to do with the peace of Christ if thou hast never sought it—never once given up anything to obtain it?

3. The first thing and the last thing to be noted of Christ's peace is that it is altogether independent of outside conditions—altogether; not as the world giveth. Think of the Master as He gave this legacy, with failure behind Him and before Him the Cross; a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and yet with unclouded soul, calm at the heart, with peace in His eyes as He looked beyond the tumult to the triumph. Paul also sent this counsel of peace to the Colossians. He, too, must have learned Christ's secret. He was in prison at the time, expecting death after a life of terrible toil, troubles on every side, fightings without and fears within; and yet, as he bore on his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, so he carried in his heart the peace of the Lord Jesus. Surely not as the world giveth. We are loath to accept this life; to give up our feverish attempts to reach peace by outside means. We think usually that all our dissatisfaction and unrest are due to our uncongenial atmosphere, uncongenial environment. Even when we really desire the peace of Christ, we think it impossible in our present surroundings, with our distractions and our work. It is something which a Thomas à Kempis may get from the cloister, which cannot survive in the hurly-burly of life. We know the thought—do we not?—that if only we could get something changed in our home, or our work, or our friends, we might reach peace; if only we might get away from our present lot. There is a monastery in Florence, fragrant with sacred memories, rich with blessed history to the religious soul. Its very dust is dear, for there the saintly Bishop Antonio lived as Christ lived, and there the prophetic Savonarola wore out his noble heart, and there also lived the pious painter, Fra Bartolommeo. It stands the forlorn relic of a dream. And even yet it breathes of the true domestic peace, with secluded cloisters where the noise of the city is hushed; with its little cells, whose bare whitewashed walls are glad with the pure delicate frescoes of the angelic painter—the reflection of his own pure soul. In the centre is a little garden, kissed by the sunshine; and up from it is seen the deep blue of the Italian sky, speaking of eternal peace. It is natural to think that one might cultivate the soul there; might there forget the world, its hate, ambitions, and fierce passions. It is a dream. Christ's peace is not a hothouse plant blighted by the wind; it rears its head to meet the storm. Christ's ideal is love in the world, though not of the world. It is rest for the toil; it is peace for the battle. It is not given by any manipulation of outward circumstances; it rules in the heart; it is an inward state.

¶ In 1862, Bishop Charles Mackenzie, after a life that looked all failure, died of fatigue and fever, amid the malarial swamps of the Zambesi. 'As for happiness,' he said to his sister not long before his death, 'I have given up looking for that altogether. Now till death my post is one of unrest and care. To be the sharer of every one's sorrow, the comforter of every one's grief, the strengthener of every one's weakness; to do this, as much as in me lies, is my aim and object.' 'He said this with a smile,' she adds, 'and oh, the peace in his face! It seemed as if nothing could shake it.'[1]

But if we admit the failure to find peace by ordinary worldly methods; if we see that it must belong to the soul—what then? How is it to be attained? Let us learn of Christ here also; it is Christ's peace. He teaches us the practical method of attaining it. He tells us plainly that it is through meekness and lowliness of heart, through the giving up of self. The way to peace is by the strait gate and the narrow way. And when we have obtained it, with the roar of life in our ears and our brain and our heart, we can still be calm in the busy market-place and the crowded street, in the multitude of our cares and thoughts and activities. Amid the

[1] F. W. Farrar, *Saintly Workers*, 183.

strife we can be at peace, because we have our heart fixed. Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. Let it arbitrate in every conflict of motive and desire. 'I have overcome the world' says Christ; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

¶ When the armies of Emmanuel had driven Diabolus from the city of Mansoul, the blessed Prince, said Bunyan, 'also ordained a new officer in the town, and a goodly person he was: his name was Mr God's-peace. This man was set over . . . all the natives of the town of Mansoul. Himself was not a native of it, but came with the Prince Emmanuel from the court. . . . This man, as I said, was made governor of the town in general. . . . And I made great observations of it that, so long as all things went in Mansoul as this sweet-natured gentleman would, the town was in most happy condition. Now there were no jars, no chidings, no interferings, no unfaithful doings in all the town of Mansoul; every man in Mansoul kept close to his own employment. The gentry, the officers, the soldiers, and all in place observed their order. And as for the women and children of the town, they followed their business joyfully; they would work and sing from morning till night: so that quite through the town of Mansoul now nothing was to be found but harmony, quietness, joy, and health.'[1]

Discouraged Youth

Col. iii. 21.—'Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged' (R.V.).

In passages like this St Paul shows how the Christian faith accepts the fact of the different relations in which we find ourselves, and deals its impartial justice all round. The precepts are simple. They are to be obeyed not as strict rules, but as expressing the spirit of the religion we profess. They begin with the obligation resting on Christians as members of families. The family life of the time was most corrupt, and Christianity purified it not by revolutionary methods but by instilling into it the pure spirit of love. We are all placed in definite relations, as husband and wife, children and parents, brothers and sisters, masters and servants. There are some relationships over which we have no control, and others we can to some extent control; but in either case we cannot escape the responsibilities. Wives, husbands, fathers, children, servants, masters are all enjoined to act according to their place and function in their respective spheres, but not singly. The one corresponds to the other, and both together make up the whole. Every duty is connected with a right; and every right brings with it a corresponding duty. We have all our rights, whether we get them or not—the wife as against the husband, the child as against the parent, the servant as against the master. We have all our duties, whether we do them or not; and our duties correspond exactly with our rights. The duties of men and women in the relationships of life are mutual, not one-sided, but balanced on either side.

The Apostle groups them together, showing first the one side and then the reverse side. Is the wife to submit to the husband? Then the husband is to love the wife. Are children to obey parents? Then parents must not provoke and discourage the children. Are servants to obey their masters? Then masters must be just and generous in their treatment. We are good at claiming and maintaining our own rights; are we as careful to maintain the rights of others? We are loud upon the duties that others owe us; do we feel as strongly the duties we owe them? Other people have rights which we must respect and gladly concede. Even slaves have rights; for of course it was to slaves Paul wrote when he spoke of servants. This was a startling idea at the time, when even in law a slave was looked on as a thing, a possession with no inherent rights. Even children have rights. This also was startling at a time when the power of a Roman father over his children was practically unlimited. Obedience was demanded from the children; and Paul asks them to give that obedience cheerfully and willingly as to the Lord. But he insists that the father also has duties. 'Children, obey your parents, Parents, provoke not your children.'

¶ 'I have no patience,' writes Stopford Brooke in his *Diary*, 'with those fathers and mothers who make of their children's sense of duty to them a daily scourge for the backs of their children, and who deliberately forget and ignore that they have a duty to their children. Cannibals, I call them, who live on the flesh and blood of their own offspring.'

[1] *The Holy War*, ch. xi.

1. 'Provoke not your children that they be not discouraged.' What the Apostle meant is quite evident. After telling children to obey, he turns to the parents and asks them to make it easy for them to obey. He warns against provoking or irritating youth by over-exactingness and constant interference and fault-finding. Authority is good and necessary, but perpetual exercise of authority in small things as well as large is disastrous both for the authority and for the real good of children. It prevents growth in the qualities of manhood. It discourages, takes away the hope of ever being able to please, and so keeps from the attempt. All education and discipline need wise interpretation of powers. Every power put into the hands of a man carries with it the possibility of abuse. The natural power which is a parent's due—and which in its measure is a teacher's due—is of course given to be used. Children must be trained, disciplined, guided, restrained. It is no appeal for anarchy. But if little ones are under our power, and rightly so, they are in our hands not for our pleasure and that our will may be done. They are human beings, immortal souls, with inalienable rights, and sins against them will recoil most terribly against the sinner.

The first natural cause we think of for discouragement in the young is over-severity, though that is not so common to-day as it has been. Still, it is easy to overstep the line, to be too exacting upon their obedience. The danger of over-severity is not very pressing when children are young, for then they are so weak and helpless and their ways are so winning that they find the road to all hearts. Then sometimes the danger is the opposite, of over-leniency, letting whims form into habits and petulancy become a vice of temper. The danger of being too exacting is greatest at that undefined period when boys and girls are no longer children and yet cannot, by the greatest stretch even of their own imagination, be called men and women. It is a difficult time, as all guardians and teachers know; and it is not a time to have the hand ever on the bearing rein. The Christian parent who has trained his children faithfully and lovingly must at such a time have a little faith —faith in the Master to whom he dedicated his children, and faith in the children themselves. Their hearts will turn sooner or later towards home. 'The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.' Novelty, new surroundings, adventures, sometimes enchant the imagination and lead captive the heart; but the mind will soon turn with longing to the place of love and peace.

When over-severity produces sullenness or despair, it usually works through an injured feeling of justice. The young have an innate sense of justice, and when that is outraged a great wrong is done. They may not be able to explain it, but instinctively they know it not to be right. That is why a system of favouritism does so much moral harm.

¶ Rousseau, in his *Confessions*, speaks of the effect a small injustice had upon his life when he was a boy. He was wrongly punished for something of which he was innocent. The passion it raised in him was so great that fifty years after, when writing about it, he felt his pulse quicken. At the time the sense of injustice almost suffocated him, and to relieve his feelings he kept screaming, Carnifex, carnifex! Torturer! tormentor! The sentiment of indignation left its scar on his heart; and that incident was the end of his childhood. The effect of it, he openly confesses, was that he was less ashamed of doing wrong, and only more afraid of being found out: he learned to dissemble, to rebel, to lie.

¶ When we read the story of Byron's early life, with his heart gradually hardened by neglect worse than cruelty, we can trace the germs of his fierce temper, his selfish lust, his sad life. He was early discouraged, and was perpetually provoked; and the result was a sullen youth, and the shipwreck of great hopes.

2. St Paul makes his warning about harshness very tender by the reason he adds—'that they be not discouraged,' that they may not lose heart and hope. 'A broken spirit, the bane of youth,' says Bengel. It is at least the end of youth. Youth is the time of hope. It is a terrible thing when in any line the young are discouraged and have lost hope. It makes them old before their time, gives them the vices of age without its virtues. Who would wilfully rob them of their hope? Not one who loves them and wishes them well. And yet this is the warning to parents to avoid discouraging their own children. Something like this is the great temptation of superior age and experience. Men make too much of mere length of living, and crush down the opinions and

endeavours of the young by a grand assumption of wisdom.

We lose much when we alienate them from us; and, what is more serious, they lose much. They lose the benefits of our wisdom, and experience, and advice. If our children do not come to us for advice and help, if they do not bring their joys and sorrows, may it not be because we discourage them so that they have not the heart or inclination to come? A combination is wanted of care and trust, care over them and trust in them—a new mixture of faith and works.

¶ The motherly love of the penguin which smothers its offspring was not hers. She saw that mistaken concern illustrated in many a household which was a model of motherly care in the eyes of a blind world. Her little folks were treasures given to her to guard and protect, not to mould into her own image. They had personalities of their own, and inheritances of their own. They were individuals not appendages, and it was her duty, she thought, to enrich them by teaching them how to use their own talents and faculties. Hers was to provide an atmosphere for them to breathe, a purity for them to feel, a liberty for them to employ. She seemed to say: 'I am at hand to hold and to help you *if necessary*, but I want you to develop your own little selves so that when you are men and women you will be persons of a free will and not creatures of circumstance.' [1]

If anywhere, it is in the home that there should be much of the love that suffereth long and is kind, that seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, and is not easily provoked, and does not lightly provoke. Tenderness does not mean laxity. It is not a reckless affection which is needed. It is the law of love. Love is there, but it is a law. The weak indulgence of one ministers to selfishness as much and has as fatal results as the over-severity of another. The love which watches and prays and works, which counts no toil lost which helps to the great end, the love which is wise as well as gentle, which is strong as well as sweet—that is the highest ideal of influence.

[1] J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, 130.

Whole-heartedness

Col. iii. 23.—'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.'

The context of these words is suggestive. St Paul is speaking on the relations of masters and slaves, and it may be that the case of Onesimus was in his mind. And what he says is that not even the worst conditions of capital and labour can ever excuse work that is half-hearted. He urges that the Christian slave must put some conscience into his work, 'not with eye service, as men pleasers.' They are to work not only when the master's eye is upon them, as looking only for man's approval, but with a single heart. Although they must do servile labour they are to rid themselves of the servile mind. Let them give of their labour cheerfully and spontaneously.

The best commentary on the words of the text is Paul's account of his own conduct. He tells the Corinthians that he was bound to preach the gospel whether he would or not, but in order to preserve his inward sense of freedom he made a point of doing the work for nothing. So here he impresses on the slaves that when they willingly do what they must do, they throw off outward compulsion and become free men. Their outward condition will remain the same. Social freedom will have to be forgone till Christianity is able to overthrow slavery by the love of Christ for men as men, but spiritual freedom may be theirs now. They work not for an earthly master only, but out of love for their Lord and Master in heaven.

1. '*Whatsoever ye do.*'—This great word 'whatsoever' covers all the ground of human effort, and claims it all for God. Work may be drudgery, or delight. That does not always depend on the *kind* of work, but on the *spirit* in which it is done.

The very best that is in us is a duty that we owe to God's purposes in the world; is a duty we owe to our brothers, who are fighting a sore battle, and who have a right to demand that nothing of ours should fail them at the pinch. But it is a duty that we also owe to ourselves. We believe that God actually cares for good work of all sorts, that He verily delights in it, and for its own sake. We are told by the

historians of art that the early religious sculptors would put no imperfect work out of their hands, even when it was so placed that it could not be seen. When questioned why the concealed parts should be so exquisitely wrought, they said that the eyes of the angels were there. They loved their work for their own thought of it, not for the praise of men, or for its price in the market.

¶ Commissioner Henry Howard was a master-builder by occupation before he joined General Booth and became one of the founders of the Salvation Army. While he was still in business, he came one day upon his workmen building a wall. Detecting a flaw near the base, he pointed it out, and received the reply that the stability of the wall was not affected and the plaster would cover up the defect. 'That won't do! Soundness for me. No covering up of bad work,' ordered Howard, and down the wall had to come. He was that kind of man in everything, and to the end.

2. 'Whatsoever ye do, *do it heartily*.'—These words were never better illustrated than in the life of the man who penned them. There was an enthusiasm and a concentration about Paul which have won the admiration of all time. 'One thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, I press towards the mark,' says the Apostle; and whatsoever he did, he did it heartily, as unto the Lord who loved him so. It gives a wonderful power to these words, and charges their mandate with redoubled urgency, when we remember who the writer was. Men have brought many charges against Paul, but his bitterest enemy has never charged him with half-heartedness. There is a glow and fervour in the man that marks in an instant the Divine enthusiast. Others might waver, Paul battled to his goal. And had we seen him working at his tentmaking, in the late night when the city was asleep, we would doubtless have found him plying the tentmaker's needle and singing, as in the prison at Philippi, with the very heartiness and zeal that filled his preaching. Whenever we think of an enthusiastic crowd, we think of uproar and wild excitement. And in the life of congregated thousands, touched into unity by some great emotion, there seems to be some call for loud expression. But the intense purpose of the whole-hearted man is never noisy. The noisiest are generally shallow. There is a certain silence, as of an under-purpose, wherever a man is working heartily.

Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control
That o'er thee swell and throng;
They will condense within thy soul
And change to purpose strong.

Whole-heartedness, then, is not a noisy virtue. So let us be on our guard against its counterfeits. But, if it be not noisy, it is one condition of the best success. How often have we heard the expression, 'he did not put *himself* into it,' to account for failure. Could we trace the history of failure we should find that for one who went to the wall through want of intellect, there were a score who reached that pass through want of heart. To concentrate, as all the Apostles did; to have the resolute enthusiasm of Jesus, *that* spirit has something congenial to success in it.

¶ Thomas Jackson's social work has been very successful. 'The Probation Officer of Chelmsford, in his annual report to the Justices, asserted: "The best Home for lads in London known to me is the Working Lads' Institute at 279 Whitechapel Road. I never get a refusal there. The splendid management is worthy of all praise."' The secret of his success is found in the words 'without reserve.' 'When he began the Whitechapel work, he whimsically convened a meeting which was only attended by himself and Mrs Jackson, and a very serious resolution was unanimously approved: "That we hereby heartily resolve that in order to comply with the condition upon which we may consistently claim the blessing of God and the assurance of success, we devote our time, strength, and money without reserve to the work of this Mission."'[1]

¶ 'Whatever I have tried to do in my life,' said Charles Dickens, 'I have tried with all my heart to do well. What I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self, and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been golden rules.'

But the virtue of whole-heartedness is more than that. It is one of the conditions of the truest happiness. There comes a certain joy, a certain zest and buoyancy of spirit, when whatsoever we do is done heartily, as to the

[1] W. Potter, *Thomas Jackson of Whitechapel*.

Lord. When we are half-hearted, the hours have leaden feet. We become fretful, easily provoked. But when, subduing feeling, we turn with our whole energy of soul to grapple with our duty or with our cross, it is wonderful how under the long shadows we hear unexpectedly a sound of music. To be half-hearted is to be half-happy. It is to live in a lack-lustre kind of way. And so it is to live in an un-Christlike way, it is to know little of the joy of Jesus. Was not the joy of Jesus Christ linked, far down, with His whole-hearted service? He never could have spoken of His joy but for His unswerving fidelity to God. And when at last upon the Cross there rang out the loud, glad cry. 'It is finished,' there was joy in it because the stupendous work of saving men had been carried through to its triumph and its crown.

The more heartily we do our duty, the more we feel we are doing it for God. It is one of the secrets for bringing heaven near us, for feeling the Infinite with us and within us, to be whole-hearted in the present task. Thinkers have often noted this strange fact: that great enthusiasms tend to become religious. Let a man be mastered by any great idea, and sooner or later he will find the shadow of God on it. But that is true not of great enthusiasms alone; it holds of whole-heartedness in every sphere. When Luther said, 'to labour is to pray,' we may be sure that he did not mean that work could ever take the place of prayer. He knew too well the value of the quiet hour with God ever to think that toil could take its place. But just as in earnest prayer we are led into the presence and glory of the King, so in our earnest and whole-hearted toil we are led into a peace and strength without which no man shall see the Lord. It is in that sense that to labour is to pray. And the loss of all half-hearted men and women is this, that above the fret and weariness of things they catch no glimpse of the eternal purpose, nor of the love, nor of the joy of God.

God Himself is the Great Artificer. When we remember the thoroughness of the Creator's workmanship; when we think of the consummate genius and care that He has lavished on the tiniest weed; when we recall the age-long discipline that was preparing the world for Jesus Christ; we feel that the heart of God is in His work. And unless our heart is in our work we must be out of touch with the Creator, the master-builder, the thorough and perfect workman. And a half-hearted servant cannot have any kinship with a whole-hearted Lord.

3. 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, *as to the Lord*.'—Paul lays his hand on the real secret of all the large enthusiasms. He centres his appeal upon a person. Had he been writing in some quiet academy, the text might have read like this, 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, for that is the road to nobility of character.' But it was for the great world he wrote. And he knew that nothing abstract, nothing cold, would ever inspire the enthusiasm of thousands. A cause must be concentrated in some powerful name, it must live in the flesh and blood of personality, if the hearts of the many are ever to be stirred, and the lives of the many are ever to be won. So Paul, with the true instinct of universal genius, gathered all abstract arguments for zeal into the living argument of Jesus. The secret of all noble living lies in fellowship with Jesus Christ.

I, the Peace, that passeth knowledge, dwell amid
the daily strife;
I, the Bread of Heaven, am broken in the sacrament of life;
Every task, however humble, sets the soul that
does it free;
Every deed of love and mercy done to man is
done to Me.

Our Duty to the Outsider

Col. iv. 5.—'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.'

1. THE distinction, stated or implied, between 'them that are without,' and 'them that are within,' is very common in the New Testament. It meets us first in our Lord's words to His disciples, 'Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all things are done in parables.' Similarly, Paul writes to the Corinthians, 'For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within, whereas them that are without God judgeth?' The phrases distinguish those who are Christians from those who are not, those who are within the fold of Christ from those who are without. And these 'outsiders,' the Apostle

says, must never be forgotten; for their sakes, and for our Master's sake, we must set a sharper watch upon ourselves, that no reproach be brought upon the name of Christ. This was the rule of his own life, to 'take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.' And the same wise rule he urges upon his colleagues in the ministry: 'In all things,' he writes to Titus, 'showing thyself an example of good works . . . that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us.' A bishop must have, along with many other qualifications, 'good testimony from them that are without.' But the counsel is not limited to any particular class; the duty of remembering the 'outsider' belongs to the whole company of believers: 'Walk in wisdom'—or, as it is written elsewhere, 'honestly'—'toward them that are without'; 'do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.' And if all this be not sufficient we may turn back to Old Testament days, and hear Nathan's stern rebuke of David because by his sin he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme; and Nehemiah's indignant remonstrance with the avaricious rulers and nobles of Judah, 'The thing that ye do is not good: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?' and Jehovah's reiterated complaint against His people that they had profaned His holy name among the nations whither they went.

2. The meaning of all this is plain—we must think more of the 'outsider'; we must consider not only what is right but what is expedient, and by a wise circumspection see to it that our good be not evil spoken of. The Church, it has been well said, has a great character to sustain in the world, and the individual Christian has that character, to some extent, in his charge. It ought, therefore, to be our daily concern jealously to guard its good name and fame. Just as a partner in a great business firm is concerned about what he calls 'the credit of the house,' and is jealous of whatever might do it injury, so ought all Christian men and women to be concerned lest the Church's reputation suffer loss through our unworthy lives.

¶ The famous Church of St Peter at Rome was not completed according to the original plan of Michelangelo; a later builder put up the façade in another order of architecture, in consequence of which the grand dome that Michelangelo fixed in the golden air is largely concealed, and the splendid proportions of the structure are not adequately realized.

Moreover, do we not owe it to Christ, and do we not also owe it to them that are without, so to present Christianity that it shall appear to be the great, the desirable thing it really is? If, as we believe, Christian truth and Christian life are the supremely great and worthy things attainable by man here, then is it not our duty so to manifest their greatness and their worth as to commend them to every man's conscience in the sight of God? To put the matter in a single word, our duty towards them that are without is to bring them within, and to do that we must first of all convince them how much better it is to come within than to remain without. Too often, alas! it is we ourselves who furnish them with their readiest excuses for remaining where they are.

(1) The 'outsider' may be alienated by *rigidness*. Conscientiousness is essential; but we must beware of insisting upon hard-and-fast rules which are chiefly gratuitous. The artist tells us that Nature abhors the straight line, that the curve is the line of beauty; and it is thus in morals: the unbending, exacting temper only irritates and repels those with whom we have to do. Christians who are so fond of straight lines that they would square the sun and flatten the rainbow do little to recommend their faith.

(2) We alienate by *hardness*. Kindness, sympathy, tenderness go a long way in dealing with outsiders; but good people sometimes give little play to sympathetic feeling. They remind one of a tuning-fork; they are genuine enough, and you get from them a true note in a steely fashion, yet no one will mistake the sound for music. It is when we have been tuned to the Divine music that the world feels the drawing magic. In a hard world like this the most unspiritual of men at once recognize love as having its source in heavenly places.

¶ Faber, in an almost fierce passage, says: 'Devout people are as a class the least kind of all classes. A scandalous thing to say, but the scandal of the fact is far greater than the scandal of acknowledging it. Religious people

are an unkindly lot. If they would add a little common kindness to their uncommon graces, they would convert two where they now only abate the prejudices of one.'

(3) We repel by *gloominess*. A sunny heart and face in these pessimistic days are great soul-winners. Men have an instinctive belief that truth is at the bottom of gladness, and they doubt the creed of one without joy. As Robert Louis Stevenson protests to a correspondent: 'I do not call that by the name of religion which fills a man with bile.' Yet how many of us are habitually austere and sad!

¶ Ruskin declared that 'we are converted, not to long and gloomy faces, but to round and laughing ones.' Oliver Wendell Holmes used to say that he would probably have become a minister if the minister who called at his home when he was a boy had not looked and talked so much like an undertaker. To Irene Petrie, the brilliant and consecrated young missionary who gave her life for Kashmir, these two tributes were paid: 'She always gave me the impression of one satisfied. Her joy was full. We saw it in her face as a schoolgirl, and in later years. That happy face will ever be before us when we think of her.' And another friend wrote: 'That almost joyous cheerfulness of spirit drew even strangers to her, and made her loved wherever she went.' [1]

The worst thing that the Pharisee did in the old days was to set goodness itself in an unattractive light. His temper and method made the people shrink from the noble righteousness that he so miserably caricatured. How different with our Master! In Him all the graces shone forth in unhindered glory. While the solemnity of the eternal underlay His character, and infinite seriousness breathed in all He said and did, He was courteous, generous, indulgent, full of peace and holy joy, and the people wondered at the gracious words that fell from His lips. At last men knew One who was at once glorious in holiness and winsome beyond all telling; they saw 'how awful Goodness is, and Virtue in her shape how lovely.' Let us be filled with His Spirit and emulate His example.

¶ In the diary of Andrew A. Bonar we read: 'In prayer in the wood for some time, having set apart three hours for devotion; felt drawn out much to pray for that peculiar fragrance which believers have about them who are very much in fellowship with God. It is like an aroma, unseen but felt. Other Christians have the beauty of the Rose of Sharon; these have the fragrance too.'

[1] H. G. Tunnicliff, *The Personality of Paul*, 34.

Two Rules about Christian Speech

Col. iv. 6.—'Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.'

We only realize the sacredness of speech, its power for good or evil, when we see the subject through the eyes of our Lord. 'But I say unto you,' He remarks, with a note of seriousness, 'that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' In the light of these strong words, does Paul over-emphasize the need for 'grace of speech'?

1. 'Let your speech be always with grace.' What is this grace of speech that is here exalted into a Christian duty? On the one hand, the people to whom Paul wrote, Greeks and Asiatics, might easily misunderstand what he meant, mistaking 'grace' for flowery words and pleasant nothings, for exaggeration and insincere praise. The Eastern sins of speech have always lain in that direction; for flattery has flourished in the East as bluntness has done in the West. But on the other hand, we, too, might mistake what he means by 'grace of speech.' We are apt to think that to be graceful in speech means to adorn our talk with the literary artifices of a Stevenson or a Charles Lamb, or to pronounce our words with a certain approved society accent. No! grace of speech is not a matter of social advantage or finical literary expression, or even a mere matter of education or polish. Few men have ever spoken with such charm and grace as simple John Bunyan, the tinker-preacher; nor was He who uttered the Beatitudes trained in the schools of His day.

What is the secret of grace of speech? It lies in the deeper meaning that Paul always applied to the word 'grace.' Just as the grace of God in his view always meant the love and tenderness of God, so the secret of grace in speech lies in the deeper thought of a love and

gentleness behind. The secret of real grace in talk is the presence in the heart of the love and sympathy of Jesus. If the love of Jesus is as a seed in the heart, it will blossom out into the flowers of kindly thoughts and gracious courtesies. No person has a greater call to be a gentleman or a lady, in all real refinement of thought and heart, than has the Christian man or woman. Grace of speech is the fruit of grace of heart, showing itself in every sphere, in the home and business, and in all our relations with the outside world.

¶ I don't suppose any one will call Robert Burns a snob, because he had heraldic bearings blazoned for himself. Yet so he had, a shield like any knight, with crest and mottoes complete: 'On a field azure, a holly bush, seeded, proper in base'—you may find the rest of it in the letter he wrote to Cunningham on 3rd March 1792. A ploughman masquerading as a peer! That, if you will; but the truth is simply this, that, in his own romantic way, Burns was only obeying a wholesome impulse in the human heart, to show by outward signs, in the eyes of all, the tokens of nobility and gentlehood that formed his heart within. And so a heart which is formed within a disciple's breast by the spirit of Him whom Dekker, three hundred years ago, called 'the first true gentleman that ever breath'd,' even Christ, the incarnation of the love and courtesy of God, should be unmistakable abroad in its bearing, for courteous behaviour and kindly chivalry and mannerly geniality, at every tide of the day and every turn of the way.[1]

(1) We justly admire the man who is straightforward and honest, who refuses to soil his tongue with insincere praise. But on the other hand, it is only right to beware of the common fault of mistaking rudeness for honesty. There are people who speak impolite things, and say they are only candid. Their plea is that they always say what they think; they cannot think one thing and say another! No one would wish them to do so, but it is the golden rule of a kindly heart, especially when dealing with persons, to say no evil, if one can say no good. The border-line between rudeness and much of what we call candour is sometimes fairly thin.

(2) Let us learn to recognize merit and faithful endeavour with kindly judicious encouragement. A kindly word may do more for a man who is down than charity; the one touches his pocket and the other touches his soul. 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.'

¶ Once, nearly forty years ago, when Tennyson had praised a poem by Rudyard Kipling, the youthful poet replied: 'When the private in the ranks is praised by the general, he cannot presume to thank him, but he fights the better next day.'

(3) There is no place where the saving courtesies of grace in speech are more needed than in the intimate relations of home and friendship. Some of us think that friendship ought to be able to stand any test, even the rough test of occasional rudeness and neglect. But it is just in the places where people meet most often, in the circles of home and friendship, where there are daily chances of friction, and where the intimacies of life and character are fully known, that the most need exists for forbearance and kindly speech. An uncivil, hasty, or ungracious word, arrested before spoken, would save the peace of many a home and the wreck of many a friendship. If we carried the ordinary civilities and courtesies of speech and manner into the home, what a revolution there would be in the average life!

¶ The most miserable homes I have ever known have often been those that ought to have been the happiest; I envied them before I got to know the whole story. The house was a palace; the head of the household had worked hard, had made money; he could command every luxury, and it was his one pride that everything that money could command was at the disposal of every member of his home-circle; art had done its best, culture had added its sweetest ministries; everything there—everything but the delicate courtesies, the ingenious devices of love, which are life's most perfect graces.[1]

2. 'Let your speech be . . . seasoned with salt.' It is obvious what is implied in this warning; for one has just to think what salt is, to see what the Apostle means. In the ordinary life, salt has two main functions: it imparts a flavour and pungency to food, and it acts as a purifying and preserving element. Both of these ideas can be carried over into Paul's sentence.

[1] A. Boyd Scott, *The Heraldry of His Disciples*, 107.

[1] J. M. Jones, *The Cup of Cold Water*, 11.

(1) It is a duty, both to ourselves and others, to impart a 'flavour' to our speech, the special flavour of whatever interest or personality we possess, that it may be true to our own thought and inner conviction, that it may have a distinction of its own, and not be moulded on other men's opinions, that it may have the quiet impress of our own experience, not insipid, aimless, and characterless, but expressing with some fearlessness the beliefs and truths of life and experience which we have tested for ourselves. This is the one thing that makes conversation a living thing. It is the secret of the world's great conversationalists. They reveal themselves!

More than that, there is needed also at times the flavour of rebuke, speech seasoned with salt that can smart. There are occasions in life when a faithful and straight word must be said, hurting that it may help. In the family, among friends, in business, or in the pulpit, the man who cannot, on occasion, talk straight, fearing no man's displeasure, is worth very little as a counsellor in the deep places of life. There are moments on which some of us can look back with shame when a loving word to the misguided or the foolish might have changed the course of a human life. Let our speech, on just occasion, be seasoned with smarting salt. Love may blunder, but if we speak the Truth in love, faithful are the wounds of a friend.

(2) There remains the second idea of salt, as the purifying, preserving element, that which arrests the germ of decay, and keeps everything clean and wholesome. 'Let your speech be seasoned with the salt of wholesome purity.' This is a command that cannot be too strongly driven home. How needful it was for those young converts at Colossæ, surrounded as they were by the license and impurity of talk of the average Greek and the Asiatic city. Even what was called the religion of their town savoured of impurity and was tainted with horrid license. But however fitted for its own day, the command has lost none of its point for the people of this generation. What would it mean for us to have our talk seasoned with the salt of purity? It would be a plea for chaste language and chaste thought — without the defiling oath which jumps so lightly to the lips, without the cheap slang with which many a good thing is belittled, without the slighting use of sacred things.

When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
Omit the oaths, which true wit cannot need.
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sin,
He pares his apple that will cleanly feed.

¶ Somewhere about a hundred years ago, in the days of good Josiah Wedgwood himself, a nobleman came to the factory, and a boy of fifteen was asked by Mr Wedgwood to take him over the works and explain the different processes. As they proceeded, the nobleman began to display his cleverness by bandying jokes with the boy, and some of them were in the worst of taste, spiced by bad language and full of profanity. At first the boy was shocked, but by and by he began to laugh at the smart remarks. Mr Wedgwood, who was following, was hotly indignant. When the nobleman returned to the office, Mr Wedgwood picked out a vase of rare workmanship and began to point out its beauties and to describe how carefully and wonderfully it had been made. The nobleman was charmed and held out his hand to receive the vase, but as Mr Wedgwood was handing it to the visitor he let it fall, and it lay shattered in a hundred pieces. The nobleman was very angry. He reproached his host for having destroyed the beautiful vase which he had so much wanted to possess, but the potter said: 'My lord, there are things more precious than any vase—things which once ruined can never be restored. I can make another vase like this for you, but you can never give back to the boy who has just left us the pure heart which you have destroyed by making light of sacred things, and by using impure words.'[1]

Bonds

Col. iv. 18.—'Remember my bonds.'

It is pathetic to think of St Paul in bonds. He was always so eager, so adventurous, so brave. His ambitions as an apostle were world-wide, and he earnestly desired to preach the gospel in the regions beyond, and, indeed, to all mankind. Yet at an age which is not considered old, this man, like a chained eagle, was confined within a Roman prison, with little, if any, opportunity to preach at all. He could not even write with his own hand the letter to the Church at Colossæ. He only signed it, and

[1] *Methodist Recorder*, 14th July 1927.

then added this touching request—'Remember my bonds.'

It is a picture of human life which every man can appreciate. No one is entirely free; no life is altogether unrestricted. There are bonds by which we are bound to the wheel of life. There are limiting influences which confine us to narrow spheres of life, and often there is no possible escape.

1. *The Fact of Limitation.*—(1) Some lives are *restricted because of ill-health.* The cripple boy can only be a spectator of the sports in which he fain would join, and men are sometimes prevented from playing their proper part in the game of life by physical infirmity. A confirmed invalid, who has never felt the blood surging through his veins, gradually comes to realize that this is the life intended for him by God, but when one who has felt the glow of health and the strength of a man is laid aside by an incapacitating disease, it is natural that he should chafe under the restraint of this enforced idleness. A business man, beholding a great opportunity, suddenly breaks down, and the opportunity passes by. A professional man sees in a vision the day when he shall have reached the top of the tree, when his doctor tells him that he must stop for a time and go at half-speed. These men had planned to occupy large and important spheres, but they have to live limited and restricted lives.

(2) Other men's lives are *limited by narrow means.* The majority of people know something of this in these hard days in which our lot is cast. One does not refer to the occasional humiliations of poverty, though these are sufficiently painful, but to the restricted life which the possession of a meagre income involves. The pleasures in which such a man and his family can indulge are not numerous. The education of his children must be plain, and he often wishes he could establish his loved ones in greater comfort. Sometimes, looking at other men who have apparently more than they need, he is tempted to resent the narrowness of his own life, the smallness of the circle in which he is compelled to move.

(3) Again, there are lives that are *restricted because of limited opportunities.* To be restricted by ill-health, or by limited gifts, is sad, but infinitely more sad is it to have the gifts, physical and mental, and yet to find no opportunities for their exercise. 'Why is light given to a man whose way is hedged in?' In obscure and unexpected places, men are to be found possessed of remarkable gifts, but they have missed the way, and have never come to their own. Sometimes it is their own fault, often it is not. Perhaps the father died while the son was at college preparing for his life-work, and this necessitated an alteration of plans. The son went up to the gate of the promised land, and looked in, but suddenly the gate was closed, and he was compelled to turn aside to some more immediately remunerative work for which he had no taste or inclination.

I thought to sail across adventurous seas
In quest of happy isles as yet unknown;
Instead—my barque is anchored to the shore—
I may not loose it; but heaven's infinite blue
Is mirrored this side of the harbour bar
No less than yonder—when there's nought to do
We still can practise patience—so, I wait.[1]

(4) Then think of the *limitations of our native endowment.* Jesus said long ago that some men are born with one talent and some with ten, and now scientific psychology, in most impressive ways, has made that real. The old, loose gospel that anybody can become anything is nonsense. We are born with ourselves. It is a limited endowment in which are both possibilities and boundaries. One of the most crucial, not to say tragic, hours in a man's life comes when he first begins to discover the boundaries of his endowment. He may have started like a wild colt in a meadow, but he finds his fence. His range is not universal. He has his limits. He may be a youth in the university who reaches the outer edge of his intellectual power. It will not let him go farther. Or here is an artist—painter, actor, musician—who finds his level, far lower than he had expected, yet, for all his strain and work, his level still. We all know that necessity which presses on us to live our lives and do our work within the limitations of our native endowment.

2. *The Meaning of Limitation.*—(1) Our limitations serve the spiritual purpose of deepening our feeling of dependence. We come to realize the presence of God through them in

[1] M. E. Ford.

a way that otherwise would be impossible. It is not when an army is strong in its resources that it depends most fully on its general. It is when it is outnumbered by the enemy, and hedged in on every side that it trusts, as with one heart, its leader. And it is through such discipline that we trust God. Would we turn to Him for protection and help if we were sufficient in ourselves? It is our ignorance, our weakness, our sense of limitation that draws us to God. Ought we not, then, to count that a blessing which brings us closer to the Father's heart? The Apostle looked upon his thorn in the flesh at first as an evil, but God gave him grace to bear it, and it brought him new revelations of what God could do, so that he blessed the very pain that gave him this new experience of Christ's love and power.

If all my years were summer, could I know
What my Lord means by His 'made white as snow'?
If all my days were sunny, could I say,
'In His fair land He wipes all tears away'?
If I were never weary, could I keep
Close to my heart, 'He gives His lovéd sleep'?
Were no graves mine, might I not come to deem
The life eternal but a baseless dream?
My winter, yea, my tears, my weariness,
Even my graves may be His way to bless;
I call them ills, yet that can surely be
Nothing but good that shows my Lord to me.

(2) Our limitations are given us that we may accept them with our will, choose them, and turn the compulsory into the voluntary. Take the limitations of native endowment. Some people resent them. They have tried to face one of these elemental compulsions of life, and they have been unable to accept it with willingness. Marvellous, however, is the change wrought in this realm by the principle of Jesus. A man, who understands that principle, facing this same necessity of dealing with a limited field of endowment, says, 'If I must live in this place, I will develop it.' Many a man with small endowment does a priceless thing within his narrow environment.

It is indispensable, if we are to live well, that we should learn the secret of those free spirits who have known how to turn the compulsory into the voluntary. They have faced life's necessity as we all do, but they have overflowed it by their willingness. For freedom is not primarily a matter of theory, but of living. There have been and there are free souls. Life never has been able to reduce them to slavery. Necessity says, 'You must earn your livelihood by this kind of toil'; and they say, 'A most interesting kind of toil—let me make the most of it.' Necessity says, 'I am going to take your life away from you'; they say, 'Nobody takes my life away from me; I lay it down of myself.'[1]

¶ Dr Fosdick tells us how a friend of his, who was hopelessly paralysed, was addressed in sympathy by an acquaintance, who said, 'Affliction does so colour the life.' 'Yes,' was the brave invalid's answer, 'and I propose to choose the colour.'

¶ 'The marvellous richness of human experience,' says Helen Keller, 'would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hill-top hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valley to traverse. We should never surrender to misfortunes or circumstances or even to our faults hopelessly, passively—as if we were but carved images with our hands hanging down, waiting for God's grace to put us into motion. We should give no quarter to spiritual slavery. We should take the initiative, look into ourselves fearlessly, search out new ideas of what to do, and ways to develop our will-power. Then God will give us enough light and love for all our needs. Limitations of all kinds are forms of discipline to encourage self-development and true freedom. They are tools put into our hands to hew away the stone and flint which keep the higher gifts hidden away in our being.'[2]

Not in dumb resignation
We lift our hands on high;
Not like the nerveless fatalist,
Content to trust and die.
Our faith springs like the eagle
Who soars to meet the sun,
And cries exulting unto Thee,
'O Lord, Thy will be done!'

[1] H. E. Fosdick, in *Christian World*, 3rd Nov. 1927.
[2] *My Religion*, 199.

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